No. 7873

FRANK LESLIE'S

BOYS' AND GIRLS' WEEKLY.

An Illustrated Journal of Amusement, Adventure, and Instruction.

Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1879, by FRANK LESLIE, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No. 662.—Vol. XXVI. NEW YORK, JUNE 28, 1879. FIVE CENTS A COPY. $2.50 A YEAR, POSTAGE FREE.

A NEW STORY, BY BRACEBRIDGE HEMYNG, BEGINS IN OUR NEXT.

Long Jim, the Scout; Or, The Death Valley of the Apaches.

By HENRY R. BRISBANE.

CHAPTER I.

"NEVER SAY DIE!"—"LAY LOW, JIM, AND LOOK OUT FOR SQUALLS!"

THIS expressive warning was addressed by the noted scout, Long Jim Shafto, to himself, one afternoon, as he was stealing his way through the timbered bottom of the Colorado River, near its headwaters in Western Texas.

The famous hunter, who had been engaged in so many desperate scrimmages with the Apaches and Comanches of the Southwest, was more than six feet in height, slightly stooping, his face covered with a full grizzly beard, and the eye beneath the shaggy brows flickered and flashed like the gleam of the rattlesnake when coiled and ready to strike in the undergrowth.

Long Jim had ridden his fiery and fleet-footed mustang Hurricane a long distance the day before, and turned him loose to eat and refresh himself. He was not tethered or restrained in any way, for horse and master had a "mutual understanding" about that matter, by which they could open communication at any time through a code of signals they had adopted.

So the scout went on a little hunt of his own on this charming day, and was separated some distance from his mustang when he muttered the significant words:

"Lay low, Jim, and look out for squalls!"

The fact was, the hunter was almost caught in a trap, for the Colorado was on his left, a branch of the same on his right, and the point of their junction was no more than half a mile in front.

He was thus in a peninsula, which he could only leave by crossing one of the streams of water or by turning squarely about and retracing his steps.

But there was a party of Apache Indians on his trail, so that if he adopted the latter course he would have brought himself face to face with them.

Long Jim Shafto was too experienced a veteran of the plains to be caught off his guard, and he descried the five Indian horsemen who were stealthily closing in upon him long before they suspected any such discovery. They had probably seen him leave camp, and had been upon his trail for a couple of hours, following and watching his movements with the eagerness and at the same time impatience which they meant should insure success.

Long Jim was at a disadvantage, for they had gotten between him and his matchless mustang. Had he been astride of that splendid steed, he would have laughed at all their efforts to overtake him.

Should the hunter push on ahead and cross either the Colorado or its branch, he would debouch into the open country beyond, and the bloodthirsty Comanches would make short work of him.

The life and death struggle, therefore, must take place on the comparatively small piece of land which lay between the two streams.—The scout had been in many desperate situations, but this looked about the worst, when he came to comprehend it all.

The timber which he was entering was of slight growth, the trunks quite far apart and free from undergrowth, so that a man or animal could be seen a long way in it—another fact greatly to his disadvantage.

The powerful vision of Jim, when he looked toward the rising ground in the distance behind him, enabled him to determine that five mounted Indians — undoubtedly Apaches—were trailing him with a care and persistency which showed that they knew who he was and meant to make an end of him this time.

"Yas—thar's squalls ahead," muttered the scout, as he wheeled about and plunged into the timber before him; "them varmints are coming for me, and, as it don't look as though I kin get clean away, it will be like a meetin' atween a couple of catamounts that are rivals in love—on which occasion the fur is pretty sure to fly. Yas, James Shafto, Esquire, squalls is coming."

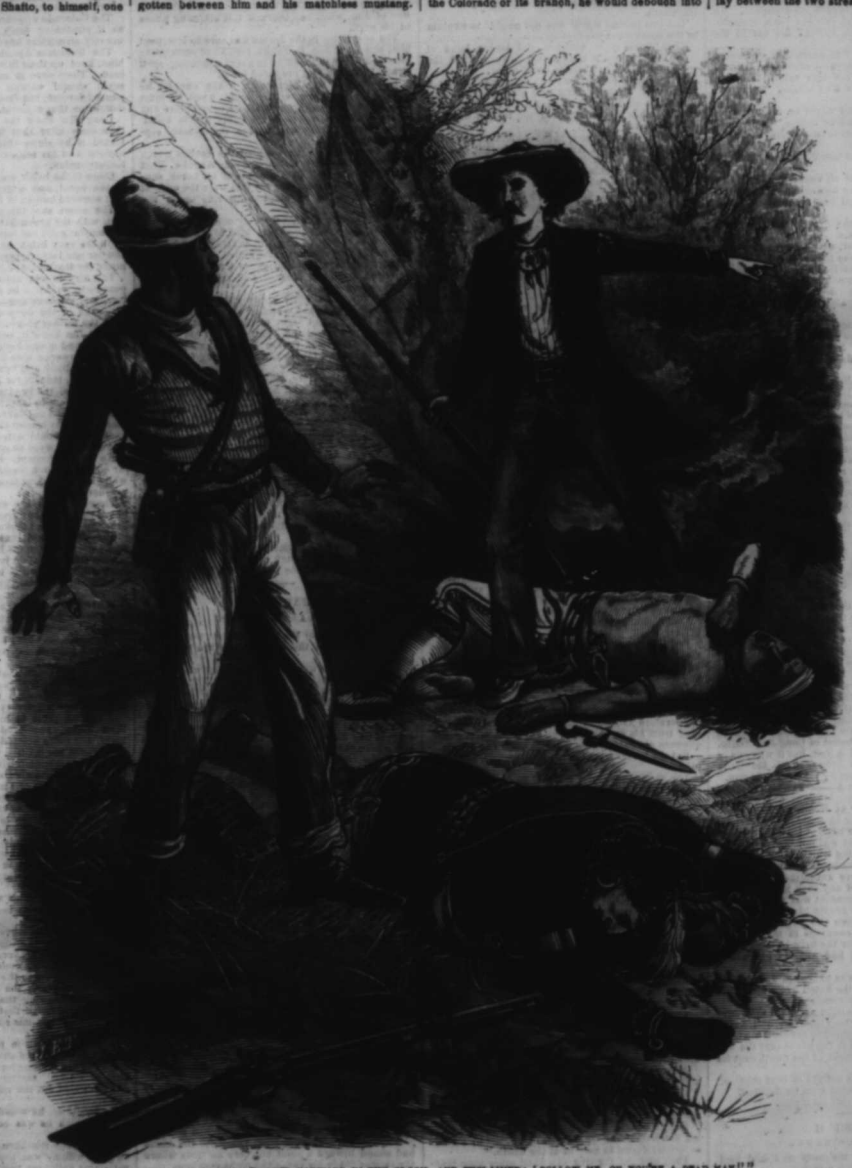
With his deadly rifle grasped in hand, the scout took long, rapid strides through the timbered bottom, not yet fully decided in his own mind as to his precise course of action.

It wouldn't do to cross either of these streams because in the open country beyond he would be placed entirely at the mercy of a party of Indians who were literally without mercy.

The Apaches would have no difficulty in trailing the fugitive in the bottom, where his footprints were more distinct in the soft, damp earth than upon the higher ground of the prairie.

Both the Colorado and its tributary were so insignificant in size that he could scarcely hope for any help from them. Had they been deep, wooded streams, he would have thrown a bloodhound, even, off the trail.

But "Never say die!" was the motto of Long Jim, who strode forward with the same deliberate step that he would have shown had he been engaged in making his way



"JUST THEN A TALL FORM DASHED FORWARD IN THE GLOOM, AND EXCLAIMED: 'FOLLOW ME, OR YOU'RE A DEAD MAN!'"

back to camp. He was looking for any peg upon which he might hang a hope.

"That's five of 'em," he muttered to himself; "and they've all got good horses, which makes it rather awkward for me. It may be that others are coming on behind. Wal, one of these fine days Long Jim expects to pass in his checks and go under, and this may be the day that's come at last. But when Jim does go down it's safe to bet he'll do so with colors flyin'—hellos!"

He was somewhat encouraged by observing that the timber on his right became more dense as he advanced, though it was not to be expected that it could become of any use for purposes of concealment.

There was a species of vine, or undergrowth, which now made its appearance, and which added in a slight degree to the hope which the scout was beginning to feel.

"If that ar' thing continues—and it sorter looks as though it did—it will help to make things lively about here. Helloa, again!"

Long Jim Shafto was absolutely amazed, for though he had spent years in tramping over Western Texas, he was totally unprepared for what met his gaze.

At some time or other a stone fortification had been thrown up in this river bottom. Possibly in the remote past some of the aborigines found themselves hard pressed, and adopted this means of postponing their inevitable doom.

Even then one might well wonder, as does the traveler in looking upon the pyramids, where the material with which the fort was constructed could have been gathered.

"Now, that ar is what I call providence," mused the scout; "and it reminds me of the time when Lone Wolf——"

But Long Jim suddenly awoke to the fact that there was too little time at his command for him to throw any of it away by idly felicitating himself upon what might be a piece of good fortune, and which, possibly, might prove a delusion and a snare.

A faint noise just then caught his attention. He bent his head forward and listened for a moment, and then stooping down, applied his ear to the ground.

"Jes' what I expected," he exclaimed, as he rose to his feet; "as soon as them Apaches seen me dive into the bushes they struck thar mustangs into a gallop and are comin' like blue blazes. All right; let 'em come!"

The fortifications, as they might be termed, consisted of an irregular circle of stones, breast-high, the circle itself being perhaps twenty feet in diameter.

Long Jim leaped over at one bound, and glanced hastily around him.

The interior was bare of all vegetation, and two or three boulders and some bleaching bones hinted the desperate struggle that had taken place there some time in the past.

The scout sat down on the ground and examined his rifle and other weapons. The former was the old-fashioned muzzle-loader, which even at this day is such a favorite among the bordermen.

Besides this, Long Jim carried a single five-chambered revolver and an immense bowie-knife. He was an ugly customer when driven to the wall, but the odds were fearfully against him in the present instance.

The brave fellow had scarcely taken the inventory of himself, as it may be called, when his trained ear detected something like a rustling of the timber, and quick as a flash his gun was at his shoulder.

The five Apaches had dismounted and were following the trail on foot. With Indian stealthfile, Long Jim suddenly caught sight of the painted figure of the leader, whose head was bent forward, his long, coarse hair, stained a half a dozen colors, straggling over his shoulders, while his gaudily-colored blanket was gathered about his figure.

The eyes of the Indian were fixed on the ground, where the almost invisible footprints of the fugitive pointed unerringly the course he had taken.

But the redskin was cautious enough to glance about him continually, so as to guard against running into any ambush.

He had looked down at the earth and then raised his eyes.

As he did so, he caught sight of the tall figure of the scout among the small trees ahead, as he stood erect behind his breastwork of stones, with his long, dreaded rifle at his shoulder, and his eye running along the rifle-barrel.

"*Hook 'em!*" exclaimed the astonished warrior, leaping back so abruptly that he bumped against the fellow behind him, and nearly knocked him over.

At the same moment, the Apaches scattered and endeavored to take refuge behind the tree-trunks, which were scarcely large enough to shelter their bodies.

But Long Jim had been expecting such a movement, and he pulled trigger at about the time the leader uttered his exclamation of amazement.

The Indian, with a piercing death-howl, bounded high in air, and fell prostrate to the ground, pierced through the chest by the bullet of Long Jim Shafto.

The latter also emitted a yell, but it was one of defiance, as he dropped from behind his flinty breastworks and began rapidly reloading his gun.

At that moment, had the Apaches chosen to make a rush, they would have caught the great scout fool, for with only his revolver at command, they could have killed him outright or so disabled the splendid hunter that he would have been at their mercy.

But the shock of the shot was not recovered from for several moments, during which Long Jim was busily occupied in ramming home another charge.

Clearly the red men were authorized in not expecting the appearance of any such fortification in their front, and their amazement was natural.

But an Indian is quick to regain himself, and if the four failed to advance when the opportunity was theirs, they were very expeditious in making a retreat which placed them for the time beyond range of the dreaded rifle that had already picked off their leader.

Their next proceeding was to separate, and move about so as to approach the hated white man from four different points of the compass.

It would take more eyesight and skill than ever he possessed to guard so many quarters, and, as the Apache Indians are not lacking in personal bravery, they were fully warranted in the belief that the sun had risen on the famous scout of the Southwest for the last time.

As for Long Jim, he was not yet of that opinion. But the great question must soon be decided.

"Never say die!" was still his motto.

CHAPTER II.

NECK AND NECK.

EVERYTHING was on the jump now, and business went forward with a rush.

The manœuvre of the Apaches was so thoroughly natural and characteristic, that Long Jim expected and prepared against it as best he could.

Any doubt that he might have entertained on the matter was quickly set at rest by the sharp report of a rifle, and the zip of the bullet within half an inch of his eyes—the sound of the gun proving that it came from precisely an opposite point to that where the warriors were first seen.

Jim ducked his head below the "gunwale" of his fortifications, and peeped through the crevices between the boulders.

In every way it was the scout's interest to drop one of his assailants whenever the chance presented itself, for with only four of them, and himself behind breastworks, the opposing forces were not so disproportionate as might seem at first glance.

And every warrior that he could pick off would tend to place the balance on the right side, until, as the scout believed, a couple more would so discourage the survivors that they would withdraw altogether.

As an additional incentive to quick work, Jim was strongly convinced that other Apaches were in the vicinity, and it would not be long before they would flock to the spot like vultures to the feast.

With the "woods full of them," the tables would be hopelessly turned against him.

But the Apaches surrounding him could not be disposed of until they presented themselves for disposition, and the careful scrutiny which the scout made of the timber surrounding him failed to reveal a single human.

Knowing the wonderful marksmanship possessed by Long Jim, they were careful about drawing his fire by exposing themselves to his aim.

Hist!

A faint quivering call, like the cry of some bird in the distance, came through the wood to the hunter crouching behind the breastwork of boulders.

Ah! he knew too well what it signified.

A reply, precisely similar, was returned from a point scarcely a hundred yards distant from the fortifications.

But this second signal was not needed to explain to the scout what the first meant.

That came from another and larger band of Apaches that were thundering down toward the spot, and would be there in short order.

If the scout should await their arrival he was a dead man. Nothing could save him.

It was a crisis where prompt action was needed, and he made up his mind on the instant what he should do.

Peering out between the boulders toward the spot where the dead Apache lay (for that was the direction the scout intended to take), he caught sight of the crouching figure of a warrior stealing forward from that point.

"Providence ag'in," muttered Long Jim, carefully running the muzzle of his gun through the crevice in front of him.

The aim was good, and the next minute, instead of one there were two inanimate Apaches stretched upon the green sward.

As rapidly as the muscular arms of the hunter could move another charge was forced down the rifle-barrel, and the ramrod was scarcely in place when it leaped over the wall of boulders and started like a deer directly toward the spot where his two victims lay upon the ground.

He did not expect to escape observation, but the manœuvre had thrown the three Apaches partly behind him, leaving a comparatively open avenue, along which he sped with astonishing swiftness.

As he anticipated, he had accomplished no more than a hundred yards when crack! crack! sounded two other guns, and he knew the trio were at his heels.

But a moving foe at that distance is an almost impossible target, owing to the scores of intervening tree-trunks, which, with reference to the fleeing fugitive, are constantly shifting their position.

It was to this fact, beyond all doubt, that the escape of Long Jim was due, since the Apache Indians include as good marksmen as equestrians.

He ran with great velocity, and had the contest remained of that character for a short time only he would have placed himself beyond reach of the guns of his pursuers by the time they arrived at the edge of the timber.

But Long Jim was in a more peculiarly perilous position than appears at first glance.

It will be remembered that he heard the signal of other Apaches, which meant they were approaching from the very direction or point toward which he was speeding with such desperate haste.

Consequently, there was fire in the front as well as the rear.

But the scout comprehended it all at the same moment he leaped over the stone wall and bounded away from the three warriors, who started in such hot-footed eagerness after him.

His manœuvre had disconcerted and left their mustangs behind them as they closed in about the white man, who was caught so much at fault.

Therefore Long Jim Shafto was not merely running from his enemies, for he knew the fatal consequences of venturing to loot out upon the prairie.

But the *horses* were the loadstone which attracted him.

The distance was not far, and he speedily caught sight of the five animals tethered among the trees and cropping the tender sward.

"Providence agin," muttered the fugitive, bending every effort toward reaching the horses with the least possible delay.

Jim was a good judge of horse-flesh, and as he approached he selected what he believed to be the best steed.

The animals raised their heads in alarm at the sight of the white man rushing toward them in such excitement.

Observing the strange figure bearing down upon them, they snorted, stamped and tugged at their lariats.

Suddenly one broke and then another; but before the third—the mustang selected by the fugitive—could free herself, Jim caught the rope, severed it with a single sweep of his knife, and with one bound threw himself astride the beast, whose head was turned eastward.

There was no saddle on his back, but a blanket was there, and pounding his heels against his ribs, the scout sent him plunging away through the timber, with a reckless fury which threatened to break the necks of both rider and steed.

A brief run brought them to the edge of the wood and to the margin of the rising prairie.

Everything now would have been just as Jim wanted it but for the alarming discovery that instantly broke upon him.

Fully a dozen mounted Comanches were thundering down upon the timber, drawn thither by a characteristic desire to be "in at the death."

They and the fugitive saw each other simultaneously.

It was fortunate that Long Jim emerged at a point several hundred yards away from where the Apaches were about to enter, and furthermore that the red men were well bunched together.

In a twinkling the horsemen, with no apparent slackening of their speed, but like the trained equestrians in the ring, wheeled about and headed toward the flying fugitive.

As they did so, they gave utterance to a whole broadside of yells.

Long Jim was not slow at that business, and he sent back an answering shout.

But the unpleasant feature of this business was, the new party of Apaches were within rifle-range of the white man at the moment the desperate contest of speed began.

If they were the best mounted, they could not fail to overhaul and capture the fugitive. If they should find themselves losing ground, or only maintaining their own, then they could appeal to their rifles.

Long Jim was extremely fortunate in the selection of the horse which he borrowed. He was, in fact, the fleetest of them all, as he proved by beginning to draw slowly, but steadily, away from his pursuers.

The latter were the first to perceive it, and they immediately opened a fusillade, the bullets whizzing about the white man and his animal as though all were trying to see how near they could come to without striking them.

Long Jim felt that he must be struck, if he maintained his then position on his steed, and he threw himself forward, with his head upon the neck of the animal, so as to offer as small a target as possible.

As if fate had determined to close up every avenue of escape, the scout now discovered another warrior, entirely separated from the others, bearing down upon him, "quartering," as may be said, his course being such that he was sure to cut him off.

"Things *are* getting warm," was the observation of Jim, when he observed this alarming phase of his peril.

The new actor in the drama was sure to intercept him, and Long Jim, therefore, instead of exhausting his steed in the futile effort to avoid a meeting, sped straight forward and prepared for it.

This warrior was certainly a brave one, for he galloped toward the terrible scout, when he must have known the collision would be over before any of his brother-Apaches could come to his assistance, comparatively brief as was the distance separating them.

As he drew nigh, he adopted the tactics which are more particularly Comanche than Apache. That is, he threw himself over the side of his horse, supporting himself by curving his toes over the back of the animal, while he pointed his rifle under the belly.

But the Indian was not the only one in that neighborhood who understood that kind of business.

Quick as thought Long Jim Shafto flattened over, so that the two enemies as they sped along on nearly parallel routes, a hundred yards from each other, displayed the novel spectacle of using their mustangs as breastworks.

Gradually the slightly converging lines brought them nigher, and each watched his opportunity.

Long Jim caught sight of the painted forehead and glowing eyes of the Apache under his horse's belly, with his long, coarse hair streaming in the wind, and saw that the Indian was trying to draw a bead upon himself.

The scout, therefore, concluded it was time for him to do the same, and he brought his gun to his shoulder.

The difficulty of securing any sort of aim under such extraordinary circumstances was almost incredible; but each had done it before, and felt equal to the task of repeating it.

It was a thrilling sight, the two mustangs galloping along almost side by side, with their riders hanging over upon opposite flanks, and each pointing his gun at the other, *underneath* the belly of his steed.

The barrels of the weapons sunk and rose with the tremendous strides of the animals, and the steady convergence continued until less than fifty yards separated them.

Then the course became precisely parallel.

They were close enough, and now the fate of the two enemies hung on the passing of a breath.

CHAPTER III.

A FEARFUL LEAP.

A SPECTATOR of the stirring scene would have wondered at the hesitancy of the two combatants.

Their mustangs were thundering over the prairie within a few rods of each other, and the riders, leaning far over the backs of the animals, held their rifles aimed underneath second after second without pulling the trigger.

Despite the wonderful skill of Apache and white man, it was hard to secure anything like a correct aim where the difficulties were so prodigious.

But the cool-headed Long Jim was the first to "get the drop" on his antagonist.

He suddenly drew head on the glowering frontispiece of the warrior and pulled trigger.

The mustang, freed of his burden, which rolled lifeless to the ground, threw up his head with a neigh of alarm and described a large semi-circle, first dropping from his run to a trot, then to a walk, and then to a full stop, as he leaned about so as to confront the other Apaches, that were straining every nerve to overhaul the desperate scout that had already caused three of their best warriors to bite the dust.

Finding himself rid of the one that seemed likely to trouble him the most, Jim Shafto speedily shifted about until he brought himself back over the spine of the mustang, though he still stretched forward with his head low down, as before, so as to offer the least possible target to his pursuers.

The latter saw that their man was leaving them behind, and they lowered the bridle, which was suspended during the brief minutes that the single horseman intruded himself into the deadly struggle.

Some of the hurtling bullets clipped the clothes of Long Jim, but his anxiety was mainly on account of his mustang.

The splendid animal could not lessen his peril from this hailstorm of death, and when so many grazed the rider some were sure to hit the horse.

The scout was confident the steed had already suffered, though as yet he showed no results from it. He was still speeding forward with the tremendous velocity he had displayed from the beginning.

Jim glanced ahead to see where he was going.

Without any direction from the rider the horse had aimed toward a point not very far from where the former made his camp the night previous.

The spot was another of those strange exceptional configurations occasionally encountered in the wild portions of Texas.

The Colorado was here compressed into a narrow canyon-like passage, which rendered it deep and swift, while the timber or bush which lined the shore was dense enough to afford effectual concealment to man or beast.

The bank immediately in front of the fugitive was a dozen or twenty feet in height, and the mustang of the hunter was aiming straight toward it.

"Can he leap it?"

This was the question Long Jim put to himself, while his grand steed was going like an arrow toward it.

The scout's only animal was capable of jumping full two rods, but he could not recall whether the narrow Colorado was wider at this particular point than that.

He thought not.

"Leastways, I'll try it," he muttered, compressing his lips with stern resolve. "I know none of the varmints straddle animiles that kin do as much, and pr'aps none kin. Great Cæsar!"

The steed at that moment made a peculiar movement—something like a convulsive shudder—while he was running at the same amazing speed.

Jim Shafto knew the meaning on the instant. *The mustang was struck.*

Rather one of the many bullets that had hit him reached his vitals and mortally wounded him.

But the horse possessed the gameness of that celebrated racer which still struggled to keep up the race after one of his legs was broken, and he bounded away with such freedom that any one less experienced than the scout would have believed no harm was done.

But Jim knew better. The little mustang was doomed, and the only question was whether he could hold out until he reached the stream, which was now but a comparatively short distance away.

The noble animal seemed to realize what was expected of him, and he stretched away with a pluck, nerve and gameness which were simply wonderful.

The Colorado appeared to come closer and closer, as if stretching forth in sympathy to meet the bravely struggling beast.

The merciless Apaches, as they steadily fell behind, kept up their firing as fast as they could reload. They were in such desperate haste lest the scout should escape them that they scarcely paused for aim, but their shots were not deprived of danger on that account.

Long Jim knew the mustang was struck more than once after that frightful shudder, for he detected it by signs which he scarcely would have noticed had his senses not been stretched to their fullest tension.

Close to the brink, another shiver shook the frame of the beast, and a groan escaped him—a groan that sounded human in the depth of suffering.

The scout saw the gleam of the water before him, with the green fringe of timber beyond; but the mustang did not falter or weaken.

On the very brink he seemed to gather his muscles for one last mighty supreme effort, and then he made the fearful leap.

The stream was wider than rider or horse supposed—too wide to be spanned by any living creature. The mustang cleared it while his was in mid-air—sank in the deep current, while a dozen feet from the further shore.

Long Jim knew it, and, springing clear, with his rifle grasped in one hand, he made a couple of tremendous sweeps with his right arm, which carried him to the bank and beneath the bushes, that most fortunately, indeed, for him overhung the water, so as to conceal the head and shoulders of the scout when he swam to land.

Long Jim did not dare crawl out of the stream just then. He was fearful that the agitation of bushes and water would attract the attention of the Apaches that were so close behind.

He therefore simply held on, with his head just far enough above water to permit him to breathe, while he listened, scarcely venturing to look for his pursuers.

They were on the shore in an instant, and he heard their peculiar grunting exclamations as they drew up short and looked over into the water.

The scout found that his feet touched bottom, and poising himself as best he could, he stealthily parted the vegetation just sufficient for him to peer outward and upward to the opposite bank, with comparatively little likelihood of being seen in turn.

There they were, drawn up on the very edge of the narrow river, and gazing over as if wondering what had become of the fugitive.

The horse that bore him so bravely was floating, limp and lifeless, down-stream, but where was the rider?

The latter knew that the Apaches, in looking about, would naturally suspect he had crawled up under the bushes, so that the escape, after all, looked like a temporary one only.

Watching them in his stealthy fashion, he saw their black eyes fixed upon the shore opposite them, and some pointed startlingly near to the very spot where the fugitive was crouching.

The only question with them was as to whether the scout had crawled out of the water and taken refuge in the belt of timber beyond, or whether he was still hiding in the stream itself.

It would seem, having learned the desperate bravery of the white man, that the Indians would have concluded that he had adopted the former course, which certainly would have been the most natural in any one when hard pressed by pursuers.

Long Jim listened, in the hope of catching some of their utterances, which would give an answer to this question.

But the sententious expressions were too jumbled and uttered in too low tones for him to comprehend them.

The Apaches, however, did not propose to stand idle or to allow the fugitive to escape, even after such a gallant endeavor.

First of all, they poured a volley into the bushes across the stream in the hope that some of the stray bullets might reach the scout, but they all struck below him, showing that, rather curiously, the position of the horse that floated a few rods in the swift current had misled them as to the spot where the rider came out.

Suddenly the whole party galloped to the left, along the side of the stream.

"They are hunting for a crossing, and will be over here in a jiffy," muttered Long Jim, who immediately crawled out the water and started on a run up the river.

As he did so, he whistled to his mustang "Hurricane," which he was confident was somewhere in the vicinity.

He was not mistaken. In a few minutes an answering whinny was heard and the intelligent animal came galloping toward him.

Springing into the saddle with a shout of delight,

the scout sped away with the speed of the wind, feeling that he could now afford to laugh at all the efforts of the Apaches.

Nothing more was seen of them, and slackening his pace, Jim continued forward until the shades of night began closing in. Then it was that he caught the glimpse of a camp-fire, which being at an appointed rendezvous, he approached without hesitation.

As he anticipated, he found his two friends there, Colonel Melville and his son Ned, both splendidly mounted and awaiting his coming.

They greeted each other cordially, and inquired as to the whereabouts of the negro servant of Colonel Melville, known as Pomp.

"He oughter been here," replied the scout; "it's just like that fool to go astray. I'll bet he's lost!"

CHAPTER IV.

AN AFRICAN ON THE WAR-PATH—COMPANIONS IN PERIL.

LONG JIM SHAFTO, the scout, was right. Pomp, the African, having started out from the ranch to meet Colonel Melville, his son Ned and the hunter, had lost his way.

On this same memorable day he crawled to the edge of a high bank and peered over, and down upon two Apache warriors that stood conversing in their own language upon some apparently important matter.

"Why can't day converse in English instead of dat blasted foreign tongue?" growled the African, when he found it impossible to gain any idea of what they were saying.

Finally the indignation of Pomp got the better of his judgment, the latter, however, never amounting to much.

"I'll bust that corcus," he muttered, assuming a crouching attitude.

The next moment he shouted:

"Look out dar! I'm coming! Cl'ar de track!"

The words were in his mouth when he leaped over the bank.

The two warriors were standing close together, and when Pomp came down he struck one of them fairly upon the shoulders, and threw a brawny arm around the neck of the other.

The redskins must have thought a mountain had fallen upon them, and one, too, of considerable dimensions.

The Indian who was struck went down all in a heap, and the other rolled on top of him, while Pomp sprawled over both.

"By the great gorryastion, I'll teach yer how to stand dar an' talk your gibberish when a 'spectable culled gemman am a listener!" called out the reckless African, who straightway proceeded to pummel first one and then the other with blows which descended like the stroke of a blacksmith upon his anvil.

The redskins were bruised, and partly stunned by such a sudden descent, but it was not their nature to meekly accept such treatment.

Each carried a knife at his girdle, though tomahawk and rifle were left at camp with their mustangs, for they could have had no thought of disturbance from any one in that part of the world.

The Apache who received the full weight of Pomp's tremendous descent naturally enough was the most injured.

But the other quickly recovered and sprang to his feet.

Drawing his formidable knife, he uttered an exclamation of fury and went for the African scalp before him.

Pomp, having done a most reckless and foolish thing, now conducted himself with extraordinary skill and tact.

Seeing his foe upon his feet, he also sprang up. He had dropped his gun, which was lying several paces distant, and made no attempt to recover it.

The savage, with his deadly weapon clasped in hand, stepped back, and then with a terrific yell bounded toward his sable antagonist.

Had the latter remained stationary, the next minute would have been his last.

The knife was aimed at his massive breast, but Pomp dropped his head suddenly and drove it forward like a battering ram. The wild blow of the warrior was spent in air, and the iron skull of his adversary struck him in the chest with terrific force.

A gasp of agony escaped the Indian, who described a back somersault, his heels going high in air, while the breath was so completely knocked out of him that he lay like one dead.

"De fellah dat runs agin dat head am apt to git hurt," called out the grinning African. "If you don't tink so try it again."

But the other Apache was on his feet and stealthily advancing upon his obstreperous foe.

Pomp saw him, and turned round like a goat ready to receive a charge; but the savage was more cautious than the other, and he too assumed a crouching attitude as he advanced upon him.

When the Indian was within a rod, the African suddenly uttered a cry of pretended terror, and wheeled about as if intending to run away.

The Apache sprang after him with uplifted knife, when, like a flash of lightning, Pomp spun around and struck him with his head, precisely as in the former instance.

The blow was terrible, and it looked as if it were fatal. The recipient lay limp and senseless.

But the negro's triumph was momentary.

The other warrior, despite his frightful shock, sprang up and bounded toward the gun.

"Hold on, dar!" shouted Pomp; "that rifle ain't loaded."

But the horrified African just then recalled that it was loaded.

And the redskin, confident of the same, brought the weapon to his shoulder.

CHAPTER V.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

THE negro, Pomp, considered himself doomed.

The Apache, having caught up the loaded rifle, raised it to his shoulder and pointed it toward the African, who stood petrified with terror.

The serpent-like eye of the warrior was running along the gleaming barrel, when the crack of another gun broke the stillness, and the Apache, with a horrible death-yell, sprang forward on his face and fell dead.

"Gorryastion! dat's de fust time I knowed my gun would shoot backward, and fat de fagin dat tries to shoot me afore shoots himself."

Just then a tall form dashed forward in the gloom, and exclaimed:

"Follow me, or you're a dead man!"

Pomp caught up his gun and obeyed, casting a side-glance at the other Indian, who showed no sign of returning consciousness.

"Have you a horse?" asked the stranger, as they ran side by side.

"Yas—ober dar in dat clump of trees."

"Good! I saw him and thought he belonged to the Apaches."

A few minutes later they were mounted and galloping over the prairie. Both were so anxious to place a good distance between them and the Apache camp that they rode fully a dozen miles before drawing rein. They then reached a suitable spot, where they decided it would be safe to halt until morning.

Here, where at last they felt they could breathe freely, they each learned something about the other.

Pomp's rescuer was Elijah Snooks, who stated that he had entered Texas upon some private matters, but had lost his bearings, and it was while striving to calculate his "latitude and longitude" he came up in time to be the means of saving Pomp's life.

The African attempted to learn the nature of this private business, but Snooks parried his questions, and demanded to know how it was that the negro himself came to be in this dangerous part of the world.

"I'm de servant of Colonel Melville," said Pomp, "who libs about a hundred miles from here, at Melville Ranch. Two days ago a hossman rode up to de ranch and gib de colonel a letter dat excited him very considerably. De hossman war on his way to Fort Sheridan wid dispatches from de commander of dat department to Colonel Bailey, what am de boss at de fort, which am about twenty miles from de ranch.

"De colonel called his young son Ned down, and dey talked ober de matter. While dey war at it, de scout, Long Jim Shafto, rid up, and dey war mighty glad to see him. I tried to l'arn what all de fuss war about, but when I sauntered too close, Long Jim just put his big foot behind me and h'isted me, so dat I gub up the job."

Pomp was in no hurry with his story, which may be considered, as it is necessary the reader should know it in order to understand what follows.

Attached to Melville Ranch was an Irishman named Mickey O'Rooney, who was absent on a hunt.

A note was pinned on the gate of the ranch, apprising him of the route taken by the other parties, who departed within an hour after the arrival of Long Jim Shafto on his horse Hurricane.

Handsome young Ned Melville was astride of his gallant mustang Paladin; the colonel was similarly well-mounted, while Pomp was furnished with a most excellent steed.

These four left the ranch very hurriedly, but before the close of the first day Colonel Melville told Pomp it was necessary to separate for a while, as he and his son Ned were looking for a certain party, who could be found more easily by branching out in this manner; but a rendezvous was appointed at a certain well-known spring, the route to which was familiar to all. In fact, it was Pomp's over-confidence which led him astray.

The two sat by their camp-fire a long time smoking and talking, Snooks showing a great curiosity to find out all he could about the family of the negro's master, but taking great care to omit previous little concerning himself.

When they were getting ready to turn in for the night, both were startled by the sound of the hoofs of a galloping horse. Both instantly sprang up and hurried back into the darkness.

The fact that there was but a single steed raised a strong suspicion that it was a friend approaching, as speedily proved to be the case, when the rider came up and leaped to the ground.

He was a white man, and Snooks immediately went forward to greet him.

"Begorrah, but it's mesilf, Mickey O'Rooney, from Tipperary, which was named after the beast I'm astride of this minute, and I'm looking for a darkey that has a powerful weakness for getting lost."

"What was his name?"

"Pomp. He wears a pair of brogues which would do for canoes, and he's so black that he puts out a lamp forty yards off; and his lips are so big that one of 'em would make a good mantel to rest your head on while ye was taking a quoit smoke—begorra! but there he is this minute!"

The Irishman fairly bounded with delight as the grinning African came forward, and the two shook hands most cordially, for they had been acquaintances and friends for years, and had become very much attached to each other.

When the African told the Irishman all he knew, the latter imparted some information of the deepest interest to Snooks as well as Pomp.

Mickey O'Rooney returned to Melville Ranch the day after the departure of those belonging there, and he discovered the note instructing him to follow as fast as he could.

This was all Mickey learned, but it was very evident that there was good cause for the haste and terror displayed by the parties in leaving Melville Ranch, and the coming of the daughter Inez must have portended complications and perils which caused the parent, brother and scout the greatest concern.

On the morrow the little party all headed for the spring, which had been appointed as the rendezvous, and reached it toward the close of the following day.

It was a lovely spot, abounding with rich, succulent grass and cool and delightful; but the three were rendered a little uneasy by the declaration of O'Rooney, the Irishman, who was quite an experienced scout, that a war-party of Apaches had been there very recently, and he was confident that Lone Wolf, the celebrated chieftain of that tribe, was with them.

And while the three are reposing in camp, we will seize the occasion to give a few words of explanation for the benefit of the reader.

Colonel Melville, the proprietor of an extensive ranch in Western Texas, was not only the father of handsome Ned, but of a beautiful daughter, Inez, about seventeen years of age, who was attending school in New Orleans.

She had remained for a long time to send and bring her out to the ranch, that she and her friend, Flora Chandler, might spend a year there. Yet the widowed father hesitated on account of the danger which must inevitably accompany such a journey over the prairies of the Southwest.

But Inez and her classmate looked upon the contemplated excursion as a sort of frolic, consisting just enough danger to give spice to the whole thing.

Flora lived in Northern Texas and Inez accompanied her to her home, and then the two made their way to Austin, reaching that point without difficulty. Thence Inez sent forward a note by a horseman, who was carrying dispatches to one of the forts, notifying her father that they were waiting at the capital of the State for him to send an escort.

But the worst of it was that at Austin they met two young friends, whom they had known for several years in New Orleans, and who, in the gallantry of their nature, offered to procure horses and escort the ladies to their destination, several hundred miles inland.

The rash proposal was accepted by the romantic girls.

Dick Harrod and Will McCormick had spent a number of years on the border, and were quite confident they could "deliver the goods."

They procured good swift horses, rifles and pistols, blankets, and indeed as full an outfit as possible. Even the girls were furnished with a revolver apiece, and all went well for a considerable distance.

The horse of one of the young men became so lame that it was deemed prudent to halt for a few days until he should perfectly recover.

While in camp, another messenger or bearer of dispatches came up with them, and Inez forwarded a second note to her father, apprising him of their journey, when parties, so very, some of the reckless little company arose unexpected.

At the date we introduce them more particularly to the reader, they were riding along on their mustangs at a leisurely gait, while their escort, consisting of Dick Harrod and Will Cormick, were at the side, talking and laughing in their most joyous manner, pointing out the beauties of the route, when they were able to withdraw their admiring gaze from the winning faces of their fair companions.

They had reached a point above the junction of the Concha with the Colorado, and having followed the main stream so long, had at last left it and struck off in a direction which, if persevered in, would lead them between the river and the mountains known as the Santa Anna Peaks.

They had a pretty clear idea of the course to follow, and they made their way along without any hesitation or doubt.

Somehow or other, Inez had got the idea in her head that the ranch of her father was within that great desert which stretches away over an area numbering many hundreds of square miles, and known as El Llano Estacado, or the Staked Plain.

But Harrod had been through this country some years before, and possessed a good general knowledge of it, and it did not take him long to convince his friends that Colonel Melville was not the man to locate his wilderness home in the midst of such a sterile tract.

Inquiry from those who were well acquainted with the site of the fort and ranch near it told the young man that the place, it is true, was at no great distance from that remarkable waste, but it could not by any means be said to be within it.

Harrod was a fine, manly youth, who lived in Austin, as did also his companion, McCormick.

Flora and McCormick were a short distance ahead of the other couple, the company following a route that seemed to have been traversed by some horsemen a short time before.

There were the prints of hoofs, though they were not numerous, and as it was in accordance with the direction given by the messenger that had preceded them, all were inclined to believe that it was the correct course to take to reach Fort Sheridan, and as a consequence, to Melville Ranch.

The misgivings which tormented Dick Harrod were the means of making him more watchful, and while he kept up his part of the conversation, which was of everything excepting the great trouble in his mind, it at the same time used his eyes to the best of his ability.

Something like an hour passed when Dick, as vigilant as ever, called attention to a ridge or swell of the prairie on their left and some distance ahead, upon the top of which several buffaloes were grazing.

"They seemed to have perched themselves there," said Inez, as their friends waited for them, "on purpose to tempt you to take a shot."

"It was not necessary that they should do that," replied Dick, "for it is high noon; we are all hungry, as usual, and yonder is our dinner. What more need we?"

"That which we have," remarked McCormick. "Yonder is a grove of trees, in which I have no doubt we shall find water, and that, with the fuel, fills the bill."

"Who shall bring him down," asked Dick—"you or I?"

"I fetched the last one, so that I believe the privilege belongs to you."

"Very well," said Dick, glad of the chance to have a little sport; "do you turn to the right and get things ready for me in the grove, while I go off after the dinner."

With this understanding, the two ladies and one gentleman diverged from the hunter and galloped to the left, toward a small clump of trees that had been agreed upon as the place for the noonday halt.

Dick Harrod, glancing at his gun to make sure it was ready for the duty required of it, at the same time headed toward the buffaloes that were cropping the grass on the swell a short distance to the left.

No more prominent targets could be needed, and the fellow was sure of securing his game without trouble.

He was a little puzzled to understand why the animals should show such a liking for this swell of the prairie, as they had been upon it from the time, at least, when the travelers first approached near enough to observe them.

Dick scrutinized them through his glass, and he was near enough now to perceive that for some reason the ridge was covered with a peculiar and luxuriant growth of grass, such as would have attracted the attention of any ruminating animal.

The buffaloes were three in number—that is, so far as could be seen from the position of the approaching horseman, who supposed that others were on the opposite side of the hill.

Dick circled around and came down upon the animals, as may be said, having singled out a large bull that stood on the very crest of the swell, where he was equally well exposed to a shot from either side.

It took but a few minutes to arrive at a point where the youth was sure of his game, when he reined up with the purpose of shooting him from the back of his steed.

Neither of the brutes looked up, and the bull especially stood at such an elevation that he seemed like a giant creature drawn against the blue sky beyond.

No sportsman could wish a better aim, and waiting until the brute in nibbling the grass moved one foreleg forward, so as to give him the shot, he pulled trigger.

The target was so fair and the distance so slight that there was scarcely the chance of missing, and the ball sped so straight that the result was fatal.

But no buffalo falls instantly, even when his heart is perforated, and the huge creature made a furious plunge down the slope, while the others, with snorts of alarm, sped away from alike fate.

Rather curiously, the wounded animal took a course leading directly toward the grove in which the young folks had encamped, as if he was desirous of doing what he could to farther the dinner.

Dick drew his horse to a standstill for the purpose of watching the creature which he knew was wounded and would soon fall.

A strange fancy entered the head of the young hunter, which was that at the very instant he had fired he heard the report of another gun from the other side of the ridge.

As he expected, the buffalo pitched forward to the ground and expired before he had gone a hundred yards from where he received the fatal shot.

A minute later Dick mastered up to the spot and sprang to the ground, with the intention of cutting off enough steaks to serve for their dinner.

As he stopped for that purpose he straightened up again.

"That's queer," he muttered; "I shot that animal just back of the foreleg on the left side. A bullet has entered from the right side in the identical spot I would have picked had I been in the position."

It might be supposed that the ball fired by Dick had missed the bones within, and had come out at the corresponding point from where it was sent in; but that was impossible on account of the relative position of himself and the target.

Still puzzled, he managed to heave the animal over, so as to gain a view of the other side.

There was the slight bloody orifice where his own bullet had gone, tearing its way to the seat of life.

More than that, the bloody point where the ball had left the body was also discovered.

In other words, here was the proof that the buffalo was killed, not by one but by two balls!

That was not a fancy, then, which entered the head of Dick Harrod, but it was the truth that some one had discharged his rifle from the other side the swell at the same instant he pulled trigger.

He and a stranger had fired together, and no one could say who was entitled to the game.

That, however, was not the question which entered the head of Dick.

"Who is he?" he asked himself, as he nervously sprang upon his steed and looked off toward the ridge.

All was quiet there, and he scrutinized the top with the keenness of a man who knows there is danger in the air.

"It must have been an Indian," he added, keeping his gaze fixed upon the place. "Indeed, it could have been no one else in this part of the world—ah! if I am not greatly mistaken I see the redskin this minute!"

CHAPTER VI.

A STRANGE SCENE.

WHILE the young adventurers were pushing westward toward Melville Ranch their friends were doing their utmost to reach them.

Colonel Melville, his son Ned, and Long Jim Shafto were following a line which converged toward that taken by Snooks, Micky O'Rooney and Pomp, the African.

Micky was an inveterate hunter, and while he and his friends were riding toward the point where they expected to rendezvous, with the others, the Irishman took occasion to turn off toward some rocky wooded hills in quest of game for supper.

While doing so, he caught sight of some foot-prints which startled him. He was off his horse in an instant, scrutinizing the ground.

"Begorrah, but it's the same," he exclaimed, following the trail with his eyes for some distance over the ground; "it's the identical beauty that I've been earching for wid an aching heart; it's a grizzly bear!"

The Irishman was right in his theory; the imprint in the soft earth was made by that dreaded denizen of the West, though he is not often encountered in that portion of Texas.

Micky had collided with one of the animals some months before, but after burying several bullets in its carcass it got away, much to the amusement of Long Jim and the disgust of Mickey, who was very anxious to secure the gigantic creature, which he was confident was at no great distance.

"I don't think ye'll be of much use to me," he added, addressing his horse; "and as ye need a good rest, I'll give it to yez, as I used to remark when I knocked me disrespectful friends insensible."

Seeking as secure a place as possible for his steed, where he was given access to grass and water, the Hibernian turned him loose, and then followed on after the bear.

The tracks were certainly those of an immense creature, and naturally enough the heart of Mickey throbbed with delight at the prospect of the liveliest sort of scrimmage.

"It's mesilf that thinks, whin I walks into camp with the claws of that crayther slung over me shoulder, and mesilf whistling St. Patrick's Day in the Morain', that Long Jim will wape tears of shame, and ax me forgiveness—bloody murther!"

There is one sort of danger that is always impending in that portion of our glorious country, and that is—Indians.

Mickey O'Rooney was picking his way through the rough wooded hills when he was recalled from his musing by the report of a rifle and the whiz of a rifle-ball in front of his eyes.

He glanced about him in a hurry, but saw nothing of his would-be assassin. There could be no doubt that he was dangerously close, and that he was not without company.

As this was the worst possible place in which to fight Indians, Mickey at once broke into a run, until he could find something that would serve better.

He had taken less than a dozen steps when a series of yells told him that several of the redskins were after him.

"Come on, ye bloody scalpeem!" shouted the fugitive. "If ye'll just folly me long enough I'll lead yees into a masked battery, and take the top-knots off of all your heads."

As the Irishman ran he continually glanced over his shoulder, but for a time could see nothing of his enemies.

By-and-by, however, he caught sight of them.

There were only two of them, but as it was certain that one of them at least carried a loaded gun Mickey was too wise to turn about to fight them.

He was seeking a place which might be used in the way of a fortification, so as to cover his body during the exchange of rifle-shots.

It wouldn't do to run too long, and he glanced anxiously about him for some such place as he had in mind.

"I guess that'll do," he muttered, darting off to one side toward a mass of rocks; "when I gits behind the same——"

Just then he leaped behind the rocks upon which he had fixed his hopes, and to his consternation found himself face to face with the very grizzly bear which he had been trailing.

He was a gigantic creature, and was engaged in helping himself to a species of small, red berry which grew upon bushes.

Sitting on his haunches, he would draw the bushes toward him, and then scoop them in with the aid of his long, red tongue.

It was a dainty meal, and he was apparently enjoying his epicurean repast when the affrighted Irishman almost ran his head directly against his.

"I axes your pardon—be the powers!"

The grizzly, without the slightest provocation, made straight for the fugitive, who only saved himself by raising his rifle as quick as thought and firing, with the muzzle almost in the mouth of the beast.

It wounded him badly, though not mortally, even at that short distance, owing to the abruptness of the aim.

But the flash and shock bewildered the beast for a moment, and he reared again on his haunches, and clawed at the wound in his neck, as though they were splinters which he was seeking to pluck out.

Mickey O'Rooney was quick-witted enough to perceive that this was his chance, and ducking his head to escape the claws which which were still fearfully close, he shot on up the ravine, remembering that he was pursued by Indians.

The latter did not forget it either, but were speeding ahead, at their best gait, now and then emitting their yells of triumph, for, though the fugitive was shut from their sight temporarily, they knew they were close upon his heels, and were confident of overtaking him speedily.

Just as they came around the rocks, Richard was himself again; that is, the grizzly had fully recovered from his daze, and seeing two Indians almost upon him, concluded they were the mortal offenders, and he went for them with a vengeance.

Before the foremost warrior comprehended his danger, the grizzly "had him." With his beam-like paws inclosing the terrified savage, he proceeded to give him a hug similar to that in which the boa indulges when crushing the antelope or ox for supper.

This was the Indian whose gun was loaded, but he was caught so suddenly and in such a frightful embrace that he could not use it.

His companion had not yet reloaded his weapon, and throwing it down he leaped forward and drove his knife into the shaggy side of the brute, in the hope of compelling him to release his brother-warrior before the life should be crushed from his body.

Micky O'Rooney perched himself upon a piece of rock which overlooked the scene.

"Begorrah, but did any one ever see the lolkes?" he asked himself with a grin. "It looks as if it's to be a Kilkenny fight. The grizzly will hug that first copper-colored gintleman to death, and then he'll swally the second, and then lay down and give up the ghost himself. It isn't often one is given such a pictoor to enjoy, and it's meself that proposes to enjoy the same."

And with that he produced his clay pipe, deliberately filled it with tobacco, struck a match upon the side of the rock on which he was setting, and began smoking.

As the pungent vapor rose about his head, he leaned his rifle against a scrubby tree behind him, threw one leg over the other, folded his hands about his knee, leaned back, and placidly reviewed the fearful contest that was going on so close at hand.

It looked very much as if it was about to terminate as he had intimated to himself, for the fight between the grizzly bear and the two warriors was to the death.

"It suggists to me the swate scenes which I used to witness and participate in at the Donnybrook Fair, where the most delightful practice of breaking heads prevails. Ah! that's the spot which I miss," he added, with a sigh of regret. "I might search the wide world over without finding the lolkes—bloody murther!"

At that instant a rifle was discharged so close to him that the bullet struck the bowl of the pipe between his teeth and shattered it into fragments, leaving scarcely a half-inch of stem in the mouth of the horrified Irishman.

(To be continued.)

FRIGHTFUL SCENE AT A FRENCH RAILWAY STATION.

A FRIGHTFUL scene took place at the Valse Railway Station, Lyons, recently. A superb Nubian lion, intended for the Bidel Menagerie, which had just arrived, was left in the station, awaiting orders from its owners. The superintendent took the precaution of removing the truck in which the animal was brought to Lyons into a corner off the line of the ordinary traffic, and put a barricade around it to prevent the accidental approach of strangers. All these steps, however, afforded only a stimulant to the curiosity of some

FRIGHTFUL SCENE AT A FRENCH RAILWAY STATION, A CATTLE-MERCHANT SEIZED BY A NUBIAN LION.

HOW EPH PAID HIS UNCLE.—"THE LISTENER UNDERSTOOD ALL IN AN INSTANT. THEY MEANT TO ROB HIS UNCLE, AND, FORTUNATELY, HE HAD OVERHEARD THEIR SCHEME."

persons who happened to be in the station. Among them was a cattle merchant, who was seized with an insane desire to go up to the wild animal and caress it as he might do a cow or sheep that he had just purchased. He put his arm inside the cage for this purpose, but in another moment horrible cries were heard, and attracted all the workmen and officials to the spot where the lion had been safely placed out of the reach of doing harm to all but those who might willfully seek danger. The sight presented was a frightful one. The infuriated animal had the limb of the adventurous cattle-dealer between his teeth, and was dragging the whole body within the iron bars. The spectators immediately armed themselves with picks, shovels and crowbars, but before they succeeded in forcing the lion to loosen his hold he had torn the man frightfully. Medical assistance was soon procured, and it was found necessary to perform an amputation to save the life of this victim of his own recklessness.

THE BIRD OF FREEDOM AS A RAT-CATCHER.

DE BERNARDI'S eagle, he that took part in the Fourth of July celebration in Sacramento, has exhibited his natural proclivities. He has been living on the refuse of the fish-stall in the market and of the butcher's shop next door. Uncle Sam, the eagle's name, is fastened by a long light chain attached to one of his legs. Dave has a couple of half-grown terriers, and having trapped a rat took the cage down to train them for their future business. It was set down on the ground a few feet from Sam, who at first did not see the rat, but when the puppies were called up and commenced smelling the cage, Sam noticed its contents. One clutch with its great claws, and the wires were bent in, the rat dragged out, pulled to pieces and swallowed almost before the lookers-on could notice the proceeding, and they say that the rat did not even have time to squeal.

HOW EPH PAID HIS UNCLE.

By LIEUT. E. H. KELLOGG.

"SAY, mother, Mr. Johnson's old aunt's dead, and we've got a holiday while he goes to the funeral. Ain't it jolly?"

The speaker was a bright lad of fourteen, who sprang through the kitchen-doorway of a country farmhouse in the western part of New York.

As he entered the room he tossed his bundle of school-books into the corner of the cupboard and turned to his mother, a jolly, matronly lady, fat, fair and forty, who was making pies and gingerbread at the kitchen-table.

"My son, I am sorry to hear you speak so of the good schoolmaster. Think of the sorrow he must feel at losing his kind aunt, who has always been so good to him."

"Well, it ain't none of my funeral, is it?" asked the young hopeful. "I guess he'll smother his tears somehow when he gets the pile she's left him! The boys say that he gets a stake of ten thousand dollars—if not more. Aunty Prue was richer than Mrs. Crœsus when her old man passed in his checks."

"My son, my son!" ejaculated the good woman, pausing, with her hands elevated with holy horror and flour and molasses combined.

"There, mother, don't lecture and I'll dry up. Of course I'm sorry for Mr. Johnson, though Aunt Prue's loss is his teetotal gain, as Parson Gains says in his sermons. But I want you to put me up a lunch, as I am going over to Uncle Ephraim's to ask him to let me have an afternoon's fishing in his trout-pond—I am."

The mother shook her head dubiously.

"You know he won't let any one fish there without paying," she said.

"I know he's close-fisted as a blacksmith's vise," replied Ephraim Stokes; "but I was named after uncle, and he never came down with a red; I can't see what harm it would do him to let me have a day's fishing. I'm going to ask him, anyhow, and he can't say worse than No! 'Nothing venture, nothing win.'"

"Well, I wish you luck, I'm sure," answered the kindly mother, as she busied herself preparing a lunch for her son; "but if you are disappointed don't take it too much to heart, Ephy."

"Nary a time; and if the old skinflint says No, I'll get square with him, or I'll know the reason why—there!"

And the merry youngster hastened to his room to prepare his fishing-tackle.

Half an hour later our hero was on his way to Uncle Ephraim's residence, which was some five miles distant.

On reaching his destination, he found the old gentleman standing at the door of his mill, quietly smoking his pipe.

"Good-morning, Uncle Ephraim!" said the namesake. "I thought, as we had a day's holiday at school, owing to the death of the master's aunt, that I'd come over and have a day's fishing in your mill-pond."

"Very good, sonny," replied the miller; "I suppose you've brought the dollar along. That's my price, you know, and my terms are invarisbly cash in advance."

The lad's jaw dropped; he had not a dollar in the world, and he said so.

"Well, then, you won't catch no fish in my pond to-day, and that settles it," said the man of business. "How do you 'spect me to earn my living if I let people fish for nothing?"

This question Eph No. 2 was unable to answer, and, with elongated visage, he turned dolefully away, and resumed his tramp homeward.

Half of the distance was over, and the tired boy sat down on the stump of a tree by the wayside to rest himself.

His walk had made him hungry, and, taking out the lunch prepared by his mother, he devoured the hard-boiled eggs, fresh bread and butter and custard pie, with considerable relish.

"Well," said he, "I always heard that Uncle Eph was as mean as pizen, and now I know he's meaner. What harm would it have done him to have allowed me half a day's fishing in his muddy old mill-pond? It wouldn't have been only a half a dollar's worth, anyhow. Bet there ain't a decent trout in the whole shebang."

And, tossing away the remains of his lunch as he stamped his foot, he rose with flushed face and heaving bosom.

As the heel of his boot struck the stump on which he had been sitting, a bright-eyed red squirrel darted away, and ran through the snake-rail fence by the roadside into an open lot beyond.

"By Jinks! there goes a squirrel! I wonder if I can't catch him?" said Eph; and, springing over the fence, the boy darted swiftly after the fleet little animal.

The squirrel took a bee-line across an open clearing, studded with scrub oak and dwarf cedar, to the dense woods beyond, and Eph was running swiftly after him, when he suddenly felt the ground tremble and yield beneath his feet, and the next instant he lost his footing, and felt himself hurled downward with the rapidity of a rocket stick.

For a moment his surprise held him spellbound, for he was in complete darkness, and he had not the slightest idea where he was, or where he was going to at such an amazing pace.

Then he struck feet foremost against some impediment in his path, his knees bent under him, and he felt a sharp pain in both ankles as he careened over and fell sideways into about two feet of water, where he lay imbedded up to his armpits, gazing stupidly upward toward the sky, which shone blue and bright above him in the opening through which he had fallen.

For some minutes the bewildered boy lay where he was, but the cool water revived him, and, rising to his feet, he stretched out his arms and found that he had fallen into an old well, with walled sides, which had evidently been covered up with boards for some purpose or another.

Evidently the boards had decayed, and in hastening over them they had broken beneath his tread, precipitating him to the bottom.

He called aloud, but the echoes of his voice returned mournfully back to the imprisoned boy, and his heart sank as he realized that no mortal help was near to aid him.

If he ever expected to emerge alive from his living tomb, his must be the hands to effect his release. So, with a prayer to heaven for help, the brave boy commenced to look around him for the best place to commence his ascent.

Several times he managed to climb a few feet upward; but again and again he lost his footing and fell back into the water; and so often had he failed, that he began to fear that his strength would give out before he was able to reach the mouth of the well.

Finally he removed his boots and socks, placing the latter in the former, which he tied in his handkerchief and hung around his neck. Then, seizing a firm hold of the slimy stones, he once again commenced to climb upward.

He had scarcely seized firm hold when he heard a noise at the top of the well, and a stone splashed into the water at his side.

Looking up, he saw a man's boots and legs dangling down from the opening and gradually the whole body followed.

His first impulse was to call aloud, and why he refrained he could never account for. But he did so, and standing where he was, the astonished boy saw the man gradually descend the well, step after step.

Half-way down he paused and uttered a low, peculiar whistle.

Then came a crackling, rumbling sound, and in a minute he disappeared from the watcher's view. What could it all mean?

The boy was unable to determine, and his heart beat with a cold thrill as the thought struck him that he had seen a ghost.

Was it the spirit of some unfortunate who, like himself, had fallen into the old well, and there perished a horrible death? If so, perchance the moldering skeleton was buried amidst the rubbish beneath his feet.

The horrible thought gave the trembling boy a new impetus to escape from his maddening position, and, taking a new hold, he commenced to climb up with vigor.

Success crowned his efforts until he reached the spot where the man had disappeared, and then, to his renewed surprise, he saw that there was a good-sized opening in the side of the well.

From this opening extended a species of passage, with a faint light glimmering at the end.

Looking upward, he saw that leading from the opening to the top of the well was a row of spikes driven between the stones of the well.

Determined to solve the mystery, our hero crept into the opening and commenced crawling along the passage.

As he proceeded the light grew stronger, and as he neared it, he heard the sound of voices conversing.

When he reached the end of the passage he found an open door, and, pausing, with bated breath, a strange sight struck his view.

The opening led to a cave hollowed out of the earth, the sides of which had been covered with logs dovetailed together, to keep the earth from falling in.

The cave was somewhat lower than the passage, and a ladder led down to the floor, on which were spread dried leaves, covered with buffalo-robes and blankets.

Various household utensils were spread around, and a small fire was burning in a rude fireplace in one corner.

But the main objects of interest to the boy were the two men who were conversing just below him.

"It was very careless, Tom," he heard one say to the other, "for you to leave those boards open on the top of the well. Some one might have discovered our hiding-place, and then everything would be up spout."

"You said that before," replied the man addressed as Tom, "and I told you I didn't leave 'em open; the infernal rotten timber must have caved in, or something of that sort, and so let's hear no more about it; we can repair the damage as soon as we've done dinner; but have you learned anything further about old Ephraim Stokes, the rich miller, and his brads?"

THE BIRD OF FREEDOM AS A RAT-CATCHER.—A WINGED RIVAL OF THE TERRIERS IN SAN FRANCISCO.

"Yes," answered the other; "the old skinflint went to Elmira yesterday, and drew five thousand dollars out of the bank to pay to Andrews, his next neighbor, in part payment for some land he intends buying of him to-morrow."

"The deuce!" ejaculated his comrade; "that's lucky! We'll go for that to-night, and if any of the five thousand reaches Andrews, he can put it in his eye."

The other laughed as if he thought the remark a good joke, and then he said:

"Just so; we'll go down to Stokes's to-night and make a clean job of it."

The listener understood all in an instant; the two men must be the robbers who had been the terror of the neighborhood for some time past, the perpetrators of the numerous mysterious robberies

astonished miller ran to his nephew's room in his night-clothes, followed by his shrieking wife in a similar state of disarray. The brave boy pointed to the spot where the wounded robbers were writhing on the ground, and told his story.

The robbers were fully convicted of the attempted burglary, and served their time in prison, while Eph, much to his gratification, was taken in hand by his uncle and placed in charge of the fish-pond, where he may be seen to-day by any readers of this paper who may see fit to pay him a day's visit.

RUNNING BUFFALO IN TEXAS.

THE athletic American hunter, who pursues the game for a livelihood, as well as from love of sport, frolics about over the prairies like a schoolboy, and thoroughly enjoys a run at buffalo. Many years ago (it is, perhaps, as well not to say exactly how many), I made one of a party who started out to run buffalo on the plains of Texas. Whatever may be the date of that buffalo-hunt, I shall only say that ladies who were babies then are now wives and mothers.

RUNNING BUFFALO IN TEXAS.—"OFF WE STARTED IN HIGH SPIRITS, WHILE THE ANTELOPES AND OTHER SMALL ANIMALS BOUNDED AWAY IN ALARM."

Fort P——, on the upper waters of the Brazos, was the name of the frontier post of which Colonel G——, an officer of Uncle Sam's dragoons, was the commandant. The country around had once been a favorite hunting-ground of the Indians, but they had been compelled to give way before the adventurous Texan settlers, and were accustomed to seek their game further to the northwest. It would have been very difficult to imagine a more beautiful country than those wide savannas, which were here and there dotted with small clumps of live-oak trees or magnolias, amongst which the Old World visitor each moment expected to see the mansion of some fine old English gentleman peering through the park-like scenery.

The second morning after my arrival at Fort P—— a buffalo-hunt took place in which I took part. My own horse being fatigued with many days' travel, the worthy commandant placed at my disposal one of his trained buffalo horses; and, as fine a Spring morning as could well be imagined—although, by-the-way, all Spring mornings are beautiful in Texas—we sallied forth.

Colonel G—— carried one of Sharp's breech-loading rifles—a most rare weapon in those days. A brace of subalterns were armed with Colonel Colt's celebrated revolvers, or "six-shooters," as they were more commonly called—these weapons being always used by the army. A hunter, named Harris, who was attached to the military station in the capacity of professional hunter and provider of game, bore a weapon without which no hunter is traveled, namely, a long rifle, with which he was an unerring shot. For my own part, I adhered to a very old friend—a short double shot-gun, loaded with ball in each barrel. I had several loose bullets in my pocket, for the convenience of loading afterward, while running a gallop, as the bullets, when well wetted in the mouth, could easily be dropped down the barrel of the gun, and the damp, causing the powder to adhere to it, would suffice to keep the leaden missile in its place for a short time.

Off we started, in high spirits, while the antelopes and other small animals bounded away in alarm; but, as we were in search of buffalo, not one of the party would condescend to waste a shot on such insignificant trifles. Even the prong-horns were perfectly safe.

Our horses pranced away over the short flower-sprinkled grass, disturbing myriads of humming insects which flew and buzzed around us, angry at being disturbed from their repast. Then through marshy spots, where tall reeds reached to our shoulders, and would have concealed us entirely had we been dismounted, we came to a track of long waving grass which had escaped the prairie-fires of the preceding year, and which now reached a height of from three to four feet. Our horses seemed quite as anxious for sport as we; they shook their heads, flourished their tails and pranced on, snorting and pricking up their ears in thorough wantonness and health. A few turkey buzzards were seen wheeling through the air a long distance off, looking no bigger than humble-bees, as their dark dark forms stood out like spots upon the white, fleecy clouds which were beginning to rise—their presence betokening wind.

"You see them birds, stranger?" said the hunter. "I'll stake high there's buffalo not far off."

"Yes, but how about the wind, Harris?" asked the colonel.

"Of course that thar cloud means wind; but I reckon it won't come till nigh night-time, and then it'll blow hard from the norrard. Still, I reckon, it'll be better to tail back and get below the swell, and so ride round 'em to the norrard. When we makes a rush at 'em, a good many of the brutes 'll bolt toward the Fort, and we'll play at *that* lot if you've no objection, colonel, because it'll be all the handier for getting in the meat."

During the few moments employed in delivering this oracular speech we had reached the apex of a swell, or undulation of the great plain, from which we could discern, at a long distance, the dark forms of the masses of buffalo. We had been riding nearly south from the fort, and a smart breeze was blowing from the south-east. I imagined that it was just possible we might approach the herd undiscovered, by riding straight on till we were within fair distance for charging.

The hunter, however, did not feel inclined to leave anything to chance, remarking that it was quite possible (though it did not appear very probable) that the wind might shift round more to the south, in which case the buffaloes would smell our approach, and at once start off at such a rate that we should never be able to come up with them. So the hunter's plan being warmly approved by the colonel, an old hand at the sport, we fell back as quickly as possible, and were soon hidden from the quickest-sighted bull of the herd, though we had much more to fear from the noses of the animals. Three-quarters of an hour brought us to the proper spot for charging, as the distance from swell to swell was not very great.

The final preparations were then made. Each man dismounted, looked to his saddle-girths, shortened his stirrup-leathers by a couple of holes, and having loosened the thong of stout buckskin which served as a curb to the bit of his bridle, fastened his *sombrero* to his saddle, so that its broad brim should not flap in his face, and in its place bound a pocket-handkerchief round his temples to screen his head from the sun; for though we dwellers in the South are used habit, from the thinness of our blood, to attacks of sunstroke than dwellers in more northern lands, it is as well to protect the head as much as possible from the hot rays which begin to make their power felt almost as soon as the sun rises above the horizon. Last of all, the weapons—rifles and pistols—were carefully inspected, and with the greatest anxiety we waited the signal to charge the herd.

"Are you all ready?" asked the colonel.

"All right!" was the response from every man.

"Run at them, then!" shouted Harris; "dash at the lower side of the mob, and do all you can to start them homeward."

"Forward, lads!" shouted the colonel, perhaps fancying for the moment that he was charging a body of Mexican cavalry.

Off we charged down the slope at full speed, and had covered nearly half a mile of ground before we were perceived by the animals; but as soon as it was evident that they had discovered us we dashed right at them, each man endeavoring to ride out his particular best.

To those who have only read of bison-hunting it may, perhaps, appear no very difficult task to separate a particular animal from the herd. But when the tyro comes to put his well-read theory into practice it will not appear so easy, as the animals invariably seek for safety in company. It is almost impossible to turn a single buffalo, except by inciting him to an angry charge, while it is altogether out of the question to make a herd change its course. Attempts to frighten the whole herd by any combination of yells and screams are useless, for the thunder of their hoofs as they gallop over the turf drowns all lesser noises. A "stampede" or a fire, alone can make them deviate from their course.

With tails raised high in the air the buffaloes run close together, their horns rattling against each other, while the horses trained to the sport strive equally with their riders to separate some special object of pursuit. When once accomplished, it would be easy work to range alongside the huge quarry and bring it to the ground by a well-directed fire.

"Go it!" yelled the colonel, as he endeavored to force a fine fat cow from the rest of the herd.

"Lay on!" shouted Harris, the hunter. "Stir 'em up; they're all a-boiling."

As he spoke he pulled his horse right up on its haunches; his long rifle was raised for an instant, and as the white smoke puffed from the barrel the bull rolled over and over in a cloud of dust.

The earth trembled beneath the rapid gallop of the countless herd, and a dull, rumbling sound was heard, which entirely deadened all other sounds. Dense clouds of dust were raised by the thousands of flying hoofs, which, together with the crack of a rifle and pistol, made the scene resemble in some degree a battle-field. The hunters were all, with the exception of myself, peppering away as rapidly as they could, the revolvers of the subalterns being heard constantly, as they plied the flying herd with leaden bullets. It was time to begin action myself if I would earn any laurels in the chase.

My horse was luckily well trained to the sport, and I soon found that he understood it quite as well as I did. He galloped along at a pretty pace till we came close upon the herd, when I at once felt a change take place in his behavior. He fairly trembled with excitement as, with head thrown forward and ears laid back, he bit viciously at the air and hurried forward, with a fire and determination which not even a chain-cable would have restrained. I could only guide him, and, indeed, felt pleased when I found that I still possessed the power to direct his headlong career.

RUNNING BUFFALO IN TEXAS.—"DISMOUNTING AS SOON AS I WAS WELL SATISFIED THAT THE SHAGGY MONSTER WAS TOO MUCH INJURED TO BE ABLE TO RISE, I GAZED UPON HIM."

We were going at a most awful pace when I selected a monster bull, and ranged alongside of him. Throwing the gun over the forepart of my bridle-arm, I pressed the trigger. The moment the report was heard, my horse turned on his heels as on a pivot, nearly throwing me, so sudden was the movement. At that instant the buffalo rolled over, raising a cloud of dust in its fall. The animal was shot through the backbone, just beyond the hips; but the wound, though severe, was not immediately mortal. The huge beast raised himself up on his forelegs, shook his shaggy mane savagely as he uttered a low growl of defiance, while his eyes flashed with anger, terrible to behold.

It will be a long time before the image of that animal is absent from my mind. Dismounting as soon as I was well satisfied that the shaggy monster was too much injured to be able to rise, I gazed upon him. His head and shoulders seemed like the forequarters of a lion fearfully caricatured, to which the short curved horns and wild gleaming eyes gave a more savage and ferocious appearance. But this expression soon changed when he had made one or two fruitless efforts, and discovered his inability to rise. His bold look of defiance and anger changed to an aspect of seeming regret and heart-sick pain. His dark eyes became more mild, and beautiful in appearance as those of a doe. His gaze wandered across the prairie in the direction where the forms of his uninjured companions were rapidly lessening in the distance.

The sight of the sufferings of this gigantic brute cooled my ardor, and for a short space of time more kindly feelings overpowered the hunting instinct which was so strong within me. Had it been in my power, I would then and there, on the instant, have restored the bull to health and strength, even though well aware that he would immediately have charged at me. In that case I should, at all events, have had the plea of self-defense to lay as flattering unction to my soul.

The end, however, was at hand... The stream of blood which flowed from the wound drained his strength. He shivered—gave a low moan—and rolled over. A thrill passed through the huge carcass, and all was still. The wild ranger of the prairies was dead.

I hastily remounted and galloped forward to escape from the regret which began to steal over me. In the hurry of the chase I soon found relief for my feelings. We sallied in pursuit of a fine fat cow, and my good steed soon enabled me to roll her dead with the contents of my second barrel; after which I stood for a time watching the exploits of my companions, who were killing on every side.

But the reckless waste of life and food was sickening, and there seemed to be little of chivalry in an encounter with a brute whose huge strength alone was insufficient to enable him to cope with man armed with a deadly rifle.

Though the risk in buffalo hunting is considerable, yet there is some profit to those who kill it for means of subsistence, but it is sincerely to be hoped that both Indians and white men will see the necessity of using moderation in the slaughter of this useful animal—the largest and noblest wild quadruped found on the American continent

RUNNING BUFFALO IN TEXAS.—"THE ANIMAL WAS SHOT THROUGH THE BACKBONE, JUST BEYOND THE HIPS; BUT THE WOUND WAS NOT IMMEDIATELY MORTAL."

RUNNING BUFFALO IN TEXAS.—"WE RALLIED IN PURSUIT OF A FINE FAT COW, AND MY STEED SOON ENABLED ME TO ROLL HER OVER DEAD WITH THE CONTENTS OF MY SECOND BARREL."

THREE BOYS.

A Story of a High School.

By WILLIAM O. STODDARD.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ALL Bunkerville was alive for the remainder of that day and evening with the novel sensation of the discovery and arrest of the two counterfeiters.

"Mrs. Betts," said the doctor to his wife at supper, "I never in all my life had three such boys as those on hand at one and the same time. I feel surer than ever that they knew something about that hornet business."

"They seem to get into almost everything."

"Why, it's said that it was through their means those fellows were arrested to-day."

"The counterfeiters?"

the account written by the editor was printed, there was room for some difficulty among his readers to determine clearly whether or not he had himself been present at the capture. Or if, indeed, the whole thing, except the actual coining of the false money, had not taken place in the editorial office of the *Clarion*, and as a regular part of its "extraordinary journalistic enterprise."

There was a fair chance for Bob and Joe Hinckley and their crowd to choke with envy now. That is, if they ventured to read the *Clarion*. Copies of it were duly mailed to at least three distant homes, but before it was printed there had been more fun for our heroes.

Quiet fun, indeed, beginning with an early start next morning, behind the two ponies and in Mrs. Porrance's big spring-wagon.

Sol and Van and Pat, guns and all, with the leg of venison stowed under the back seat; and Mrs. Porrance said, as she locked the door of her house behind her:

"It's years and years since I've left it all alone. I guess it can take care of itself for a day or two."

It was quite likely it could, in so honest and orderly a community as Bunkerville, especially as nobody knew its owners had departed.

Anything like a burglary had not been heard of in that valley since the Indians were driven out of it.

The road to Deacon Whitlock's was a pretty good one, but a large share of it was up-hill. So much so that Sol Rogers remarked:

"He must be a wonderfully good man, now, to come to meeting with a drive like this to get home again."

"It's pretty bad at some seasons," said the widow, "and in Winter he's snowed in half the time. But his farm's a good one when you get there."

"It ought to be," said Van.

The nine miles were long ones, sure enough, but they led through more than a little fine scenery, as well as some that was not so fine.

At last, as the ponies paused for breath on the brow of a hill, Mrs. Porrance pointed down into the level valley below, with a bit of a lake in the middle of it, and said:

"All that belongs to Deacon Whitlock, and that's his house."

"House?" exclaimed Sol; "why, it looks like a village of big barns."

So it did, but the house was there, nevertheless, and when Pat pulled in the ponies at the gate there was the deacon himself, and his wife, and two grown-up daughters older than Almira, and a half a dozen more crowding out of the ample front porch to welcome the visitors from the village.

"Big enough," said Sol to Van; "why, that house reaches out every which way."

And so it did, for it had been built a piece at a time ever since the country was settled, and each new Whitlock that had come to own it had stuck on his addition to please himself.

They had all, evidently, been men of more breadth than depth in their architectural ideas, and only the central building could boast of more than one story.

To balance that, however, there were no small rooms, and there was any required amount of cellar under all.

A grand old farmhouse, well kept up, without a sign of shabbiness or decay, for Deacon Whitlock was a "forehanded man," as his fathers had been before him.

"Glad to see you, Mrs. Porrance. Glad to see you, Almira. The boys, too. This 'ere's the first Thanksgivin' I've known of that none of mine could make out to come home. They're too far away, most of 'em."

Van thought he noticed a bit of a tremor in the old man's tone as he said that, for Mrs. Porrance had already told him that two of the deacon's boys were sleeping on "far-away" battle-fields; one was in Europe, one in California, one, the last to leave, was near enough; but he had married against his father's will, and neither he nor his wife nor their babies were welcome at the farmhouse.

There is a good deal of natural hero-worshipfulness among those old-hill country farmers of New England, and sometimes it crops out in one way and sometimes in another.

The old man's face put on a queer expression when Sol Rogers hugged out the leg of venison.

"You thought likely we wouldn't give ye enough to eat, eh?"

"No, Deacon Whitlock," interposed Mrs. Porrance; "the boys have got a long story to tell you, and that's a part of it. I let them have their own way."

"Oh! It's a story, is it? That's all right. Bring it in, boys. We'll have some cuts of it broiled. Come in, all of ye. Why, boys, I've killed deer all over this 'ere valley. I shot a bear, once, right down there between them two barns. That is, about where they air now. I'll tell ye all about it."

The day was not a bitterly cold one, but quite crisp enough to warrant the blazing fires in Deacon Whitlock's big fire-place.

Neither Van Rivington nor Pat Nolan had ever seen anything like it before, and they did not wonder at all at the strong prejudice the old man expressed against stoves.

"Have to have 'em in the parlor," he told them, "but I don't mean to let 'em in anywhere else; not so long as my wood lots hold out. That 'll be for my time, I guess."

Dinner was not to be ready till two o'clock, or after, and Mrs. Porrance and Almira were speedily busy with Mrs. Whitlock and her daughters in grave consultation over the cookery.

The boys saw that their landlady was looked up to as an authority in such matters, and Sol whispered to Van:

"What couldn't she tell 'em about corn? We won't have a grain to-day, I'm afraid."

The boys had been sitting around in all sorts of uneasiness, scarcely knowing what to do with themselves, when they heard Mrs. Whitlock's better-half exclaim, from the kitchen:

"Now, Deacon, where on earth are you goin' with that there gun?"

"Goin'? Why, the boys must be doin' something' or they'll spile. Won't have no kind of an appetite for their dinner. We're all goin' down to the swamp arter some rabbits."

"There ain't a speck o' snow on the ground to track 'em by."

"Can't help that. Old Pan 'll know where to find 'em."

And in another minute he was among "the boys," calling upon them to follow him to the swamp.

A dry sort of a swamp it was, too, at that season, a good half-mile from the house toward the bit of a lake, all bushes and scrubby trees and coarse grass, among which old "Pan," a sort of mongrel setter dog, lame of one leg, dashed in and out as if she, too, had an appetite to win.

The deacon took his station, gun in hand, at the western corner of the swamp, of which there was at least twenty acres, bidding his young friends scatter themselves further along on the border, and be careful not to shoot each other.

"Pan'll have a rabbit out very quick, or I'm mistaken. You'll have to shoot 'em running. No waitin' for still shots."

And so it proved, for in less than three minutes the deacon himself showed them how. Big and clumsy as his gun looked, like himself, he did not miss the rabbit. Over it rolled, and Pan dashed back into the swamp, like the keen old huntress that she was, without waiting orders.

The next "jumper," as Sol called them, came out for Pat Nolan, but before he could raise his heavy weapon it was out of sight, with Pan at its heels.

Up and across the field went the rabbit, at a great pace, and poor Pat looked ruefully after it, feeling as if he had lost the honors of the day.

Across, then back, and then suddenly doubling for the swamp again, the fugitive came bounding within range of both Sol and Van.

Sol had been watching almost breathlessly the race between the dog and rabbit, but Van was ready to a second, and the first "running shot" he had ever made in his life was a complete success. The nimble game rolled over, and Deacon Whitlock himself roared a great shout of approval and exultation.

"You'll learn, you will. That was a good shot. Look out! Pan's gone in again."

So she had, and in the course of the next two hours they had three rabbits more among them, Sol alone killing to count one for his own gun.

"What's the matter, Sol?" asked Van. "Won't your gun hit the rabbits?"

"Of course it will. The fault's with the rabbits."

"What's the matter with them?" asked Pat. "They're good enough rabbits, for all I can see."

"So they are. Deacon Whitlock, what's the matter with the rabbits that I didn't kill any?"

"Can't say, Sol. Maybe they don't know you yet. You must stay and get acquainted. How's your appetite coming on?"

"Appetite? Oh, there's nothing the matter with that."

"Then we'd better set out for the house. There'll be just about good time now to get ready for dinner. Seems to me I could eat something myself."

The boys all thought so, afterward, when they saw him at work. He could scarcely have needed any rabbit-shooting to get him ready.

But what a dinner that was!

The great dining-room of the old farmhouse looked as if it had been made for such a dinner.

The table itself was a big one, at any time, and it had been lengthened for the occasion. Nor was there any too much of it, for the deacon had provided mouths for his dinner. His three stalwart farm-hands were there, and so were several vigorous old people of the neighborhood, as well as Mrs. Porrance's party, besides the Whitlock family itself. There was nothing stuck-up or aristocratic about the deacon, for all his broad acres and his obstinate temper.

Plenty of good appetite around the table, and then the things on it!

A huge stuffed turkey, as a matter of course. No Thanksgiving dinner would have been complete without that.

Roast chickens, such as do not often get into city markets.

A noble little martyr of a roast pig. That was a notion of the deacon's.

Steaks from the boys' own venison, out of compliment to them.

No end of vegetables, and all that sort of thing.

Everything well-cooked and in overwhelming abundance, and "helped around" in almost too great an anxiety that every one should have the best and enough of it.

The feast went on amid a continual talk among the older people about old times, and marvelous were some of the stories which were listened to.

There came an end at last, however, or at least a change, for the table was cleared for the coming of the pies, nuts, apples and cider.

Then Deacon Whitlock straightened himself in his big chair at the end of the table and said:

"Now, boys, for the story about that venison. We're ready for it."

"Van," said Pat and Sol, almost in the same breath, "you tell it."

"I'll try," said Van; but he felt as if he had undertaken a big job.

Tell it he did, however, and not at too great length, either, and they all listened splendidly, except that they worked away at the eatables all the same.

"Caught 'em, did they?" exclaimed the deacon, as Van concluded. "Caught 'em and locked 'em up. Well, I declare! That beats bear-killing. It's almost up to Indians. I'm glad you fetched the venison, for it does help to make it all real."

"It's true, every word of it," remarked Mrs. Porrance, and Almira added:

"There will be a full account of it printed in the *Clarion*."

"Boys!" said the deacon, "you must stay over to-morrow and help eat those rabbits. Mebbe we can show you some more shooting. Needn't go till Saturday; need they, Mrs. Porrance?"

"Of course not. But look there, Deacon Whitlock! Out of the window!"

"Snow, sure's you live! Time it came. It's held off later'n usual. We can track game to-morrow, boys. Winter's coming."

The three youngsters were already at the window, gazing almost excitedly upon the fast-falling, feathery flakes.

"The Fall months are over," continued the deacon. "Now for sleighing and coasting and skating and snowballing, eh? I used to be a boy once, years and years ago, and nothing ever tickled me like the first snow."

"That's just the way we feel about it," said Sol Rogers. But Van asked:

"Deacon Whitlock, is there as much fun in Winter in the country as there is in Autumn?"

"Twice as much."

"I mean for boys at school?"

"That was the only time o' year we went to school when I was a boy. The rest of the year we had to work. Why, your fun's all ahead of you, or I'm mistaken."

"Well, then," said Pat Nolan, "if there's more going on in Winter than there's been since we came, I'd like to have the longest kind of a Winter."

"It'll be long enough before it's over," said Mrs. Porrance. "But I wonder why it is that it always snows on Thanksgiving Day?"

And while the old folks were busily discussing that grave question the three boys looked at one another and out of the window.

"The country's a big thing," slowly remarked Pat Nolan.

"It's grand all the time," said Sol.

"Boys," said Van Rivington, "seems to me I'm a year older than I was when I left home."

And so he was.

THE END.

WANDERING WILLIE;

Or,

Lost in the Bush.

The Adventures of a Missionary's Son in the Wilds of Africa.

CHAPTER XVI.

[Continued from page 301.]

ALVEZ took the glass from him and raised it to his eyes, when a look of blank amazement came over his face.

"*Santa Maria!*" he cried; "you are right. All has vanished. What does it mean?"

"Let us push on and see," replied Willie.

Their curiosity now thoroughly aroused to understand this mystery, they doubled their pace.

The distance was greater than it looked.

It was nearly nightfall when they reached the mountain's base.

Nothing is so deceptive as a hill or a mountain when you are looking at it from a distance, and calculating how far it is away from you.

The unpracticed observer generally underestimates the actual distance by several miles.

Willie soon discovered an explanation of the mysterious disappearance of the men Alvez declared he had seen.

The base of the mountain was honeycombed into caves, the entrances to a dozen or more being clearly visible.

He had heard of caves existing in these mountains, and could understand why Benguela had sought them.

They would make an excellent hiding-place, and as game was abundant in the vicinity the fugitives would not want for sustenance.

While they were looking at the cavernous holes a man came out with a pitcher, and was proceeding toward a spring in the neighborhood when he stopped short.

He was confronted by Alvez and his men.

Whether to fly or remain still he did not know for a moment, but at length he turned round and ran for the caves.

Alvez leveled his rifle at the unfortunate wretch and brought him down at short range.

The report alarmed his companions.

Benguela and five men came out to investigate the cause of the disturbance.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" he demanded.

"I am Alvez, the Portuguese merchant," was the reply, "and I want a white girl whom you hold captive."

"You are misinformed," said Benguela. "I have no such prisoner. I am in hiding here with some Fetich men from Kasonga, and we intend to remain here till the troubles which affect our country are over."

Alvez motioned to Willie to speak to him.

The latter had been standing behind Alvez, and the magician had not hitherto observed him.

No sooner had Benguela set eyes upon him than he changed color.

"You know me?" exclaimed Willie.

"Yes," was the laconic answer.

"Then you will scarcely deem it necessary to repeat the falsehood you have just uttered."

"What do you allude to?"

"Your denial that the white girl is not with you."

"I will swear it," Benguela said, positively.

"Have you killed her?"

"No. We have just arrived at these caves and were exploring them to find a secure place wherein to lay our weary heads this night. If you doubt my word, explore the caves yourself, and if you are satisfied, go your way and let us sleep in peace. We have no quarrel with you."

This proposition was acceptable to Alvez.

Telling his men to guard Benguela and his followers, he expressed his determination to enter the caves with Willie.

"I have only had a light," said Willie.

"Hush," whispered Alvez. "I have one, but I do not wish that villain to see it. I am apprehensive of some trick. He has been here before, and knows the ins and outs better than we do."

"Is that so?"

"Oh, yes; horrible deeds have been done in these mountains, if all the people say is true. At one time two thousand men were brought here to be massacred, and their bones lie white and ghastly inside."

"Terrible!" exclaimed Willie, who never liked to hear these tales of blood.

They entered the caves, and a smile of malicious satisfaction appeared on Benguela's face.

Having gone about twenty yards along a narrow passage, Alvez stopped.

Feeling in his pocket he produced a small piece of wax candle and some matches.

"I never travel without these appliances of civilization," he remarked; "and it is fortunate I had them about me."

"Yes, indeed," answered Willie.

Alvez suspected that they would meet with some inequality in the ground, or some pitfall which would engulf them.

Nor was he mistaken.

"Let me go first; these places are generally full of holes, and that crafty old serpent Benguela would never warn me now."

Carefully holding his candle before him, he advanced cautiously.

Suddenly a black chasm yawned before him.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "as I expected. One more step and we should have gone to kingdom come."

"What is it?" asked Willie.

"A chasm. We must retrace our steps and try some other route."

They were now horrified to hear a deep groan.

"Did you hear that?" inquired Willie.

"Certainly!" responded the Portuguese. "It sounded like a human being in the last extremity."

Bending over the hole he added:

"Who's there?"

"Help! faintly responded some one.

"Where are you?"

"Hanging down the abyss."

"How?"

"A rope is round my body," was the answer.

Willie was greatly excited.

"Oh!" he says, "it sounds like Birdie's voice."

"Don't be agitated. Keep yourself cool," replied Alvez, "and hold this candle while I investigate."

Willie did so, and Alvez, sinking on his hands and knees, searched the ground.

He was rewarded by finding the end of a rope tied round a projecting piece of rock.

The other end was fastened round the body of the victim, which had been lowered into the pit.

"I've got it. Eureka!" he cried.

"Do you want any help?" asked Willie.

"No, I can haul it up myself."

Seizing the rope tightly, he began to pull it up, and in a few minutes was pleased to feel a warm, human face.

It was Birdie, but so pale and bloodless that she looked like a ghost.

Willie clasped her in his arms and imprinted sweet kisses on her livid lips.

"My darling," he cried. "The good God be thanked."

"Is it you, Willie?" she gasped.

"Yes, dearest. How long have you been there?"

"It seems an age. I thought I should die. I prayed for death. My arms were being dragged out of their sockets. Oh! it was awful to hang down there in the dark. I could hear the serpents hiss below."

"Why did Benguela put you there?"

"He said I should hang there until I died of starvation, to drive away the evil spirits of the caves."

"The wretch!"

Alvez unbound her and asked her if she could walk.

"Oh, yes, sir. I feel stronger now," she answered.

"That's right. Put your arm round her waist, Willie. She might get dizzy and fall."

Willie did so.

"This is a new friend of mine, dear," he explained. "Mr. Alvez, of Loanda, who has been a perfect godsend to me and father."

"Father? Have you found Mr. Hill?"

"Oh, I forgot, you did not know that. Yes, dear, he is in Signor Alvez's camp."

"Come on," said Alvez. "I've made up my mind."

"To what, sir?"

"Benguela and his men shall die."

"Spare them," said Willie.

"It is useless to supplicate," continued Alvez. "They have deserved death a hundred times over. When Benguela saw us go along this passage, he thought we should be dashed to pieces down the chasm."

"That is painfully evident."

"That candle alone saved us, and in addition, he doomed this girl to a cruel death. He must die."

"Give him time for repentance."

"There is no repentance in such a vile wretch. Do not waste any sympathy on him," was the reply.

"Is that final?"

"It is."

They now began to retrace their steps, and soon a streak of bluish light revealed the exit.

When Benguela saw them appear with Birdie, he became the victim of an abject fear.

Sinking on his knees he cried:

"Mercy! mercy!"

Alvez waved his arm impatiently.

"Make ready!" he exclaimed to his soldiers.

The click of the rifles sounded ominously as they were brought to the position.

At this the other five inferior magicians sank on their knees.

"Present," continued Alvez.

The wretched men groveled in the dust in dire terror.

Those who had never shown mercy to others could not face death themselves.

They had poured out, in their fanaticism, which spared neither young nor old, the innocent blood of thousands.

The day of retribution had come.

"Fire!" cried Alvez.

Fifteen rifles rang out on the clear night-air, and when the smoke cleared away six corpses strewed the ground.

The thirsty earth drank up their steaming blood.

The tragedy was over.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ESCAPE TO THE COAST.

THERE being a beautiful moon, and no one wishing to stay at the caves, Alvez ordered a march back to his camp.

It was reached at midnight.

The next day he started for Kasonga.

Queen Jumah had had dealings with him, and as he made her a handsome present of cloth, she received him very graciously.

To Willie she was particularly civil.

Birdie she regarded with undisguised contempt and aversion.

Scarcely had Willie been two hours in the city before the queen sent for him, receiving him alone.

"I have sent my husband, the king, away," she said.

"What for?" asked Willie, innocently.

"Because I love you."

"No?"

"Yes; you shall be my king."

Willie assured her, as soon as he could recover from his astonishment, that he was highly flattered at the compliment she paid him.

But at the same time he explained that he could not accept the high dignity to which she wished to raise him.

Jumah was filled with rage.

"You refuse me?" she exclaimed.

"Yes, madam."

"Refuse the Queen of Matama?"

"I have to do so."

"Are you crazy?"

"By no means, but I love another," said Willie.

The queen uttered a cry like that of an enraged tigress.

"Who is she?" demanded she.

"The girl I went to rescue."

"She whom you call Birdie?"

"Yes, madam."

"Stay here till I return," said the queen.

Willie, feeling very uncomfortable, remained alone half an hour.

When she returned she was smiling.

"You will love Birdie no more," she said.

Willie turned deadly pale.

Had this savage amazon killed his darling?

"I am at a loss to understand your Majesty," he said.

"Your father and Birdie are sold into slavery."

"Ha!"

"I sold them to Alves for a bale of cloth, and he and his caravan are now leaving the city."

Willie breathed again.

He knew that with Alves they would be safe.

The clever queen had for once outwitted herself.

"Now will you marry me?" she asked.

"Give me three days to consider," he replied.

"Be it so; but beware how you refuse me."

"If I do, what then?" he inquired, boldly.

"You shall chose between me and—death!"

This was spoken resolutely.

Bestowing a look, half of anger, half of love upon him, she quitted the room.

Willie was in a dilemma.

What should he do to escape from the unpleasant position in which the ill-timed affection of Jumah had placed him?

It was difficult to say.

While he was deliberating, an armed man came into the room and sat down near the door.

"Am I a prisoner?" asked Willie.

The soldier nodded.

"Can't you speak?"

"My orders are to hold no communication with you," replied the man, "but to shoot you if you attempt to get away."

Willie shrugged his shoulders and sat down.

From time to time he looked at his guard, and it seemed to him that the face was familiar to him.

Surely it was one of Alves's men.

What more likely than that Alves had made some plan for his rescue?

The day passed in silence and gloom.

Food and drink were brought him at stated intervals, but of Jumah he saw nothing; neither did he hear from her.

When night fell he threw himself on some grass in a corner and tried to sleep.

He could not do so.

His mind was in a state of nervous agitation, and there was no sleep for him until nearly midnight, when he fell into an uneasy doze.

Suddenly he awoke with a start.

Some one was bending over him.

By the pale rays of the moon, which filtered in through the window, he saw it was the soldier.

Did the man intend to murder him?

This horrible idea was soon dissipated, however, for the soldier placed his finger on his lips to enjoin silence.

Willie got up on his feet and said, in a low voice:

"What do you want me to do?"

"Follow me."

"Where?"

"You will see in time. I am your good friend."

"But how do I know?"

"Signor Alves your friend, too."

Willie hesitated, but only for a moment, and then he determined to follow the man, no matter what might occur.

The door was opened and they crept out.

No one was about.

They got out of the precincts of the palace without being seen, the guards being all drunk with pombe.

It was their way of celebrating the victory they had achieved over the Kasongas.

The soldier did not venture to speak until they were well out of the city.

Then he opened his mouth.

"All safe now," he said.

"I guess so," replied Willie.

"Alves bought two slaves from Jumah, for which he gave a bale of cloth and me."

"Gave you, too?"

"Yes, as a present. I am armed with a rifle. Jumah's warriors have no guns."

"Well?"

"He said, 'Make this soldier guard your white prisoner. He can shoot if he tries to escape.'"

"I see," exclaimed Willie.

"Then he said to me, 'Take him out at night and bring him to me. I shall camp ten miles from the city and wait for you.'"

"Good enough," replied Willie. "Alves is a better friend than I thought he was."

A march of ten miles brought them to the place where Alves was camped.

Willie was received with open arms by his father and Birdie.

Alves smiled a welcome.

At daybreak the camp was astir and the caravan started for the coast.

It took a circuitous route, which may account for its immunity from attack.

No doubt Queen Jumah and her amazons followed in pursuit, but they never caught up with Alves.

In ten days the coast was reached.

Mr. Hill, Willie and Birdie were hospitably entertained at Alves's ranch, until they could get passage on a trading ship for America.

One day Birdie, who was looking well and strong again, put her hand in the pocket of her dress and drew out some bright-looking stones.

"I wonder what these are?" she remarked.

There were ten or a dozen of them.

"Let me look?" said Willie.

He handled them curiously.

While he was examining them Signor Alves came up.

"I don't know what they are," said Willie, puzzled.

Alves begged permission to handle them, which was readily granted.

Suddenly he exclaimed:

"I can tell you what they are."

"You can?"

"Sinor *Dios*, yes."

"What?"

"African diamonds of the finest water."

"Diamonds?" repeated both Birdie and Willie, in surprise.

"Yes, indeed. Where did you get them?"

"While I was confined in the Tower in Kasonga land," replied Birdie, "I picked them out of an idol that the priests used to worship."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," exclaimed Alves.

"By all means."

"If twenty thousand dollars will be of any use to you, I'll give you that sum as the price of those stones."

"Really?"

"I will, indeed."

"They're yours," said Birdie, handing them to him.

Turning to Willie, she added, naively: "Only think that your little wife, that is to be, should bring you a fortune, dear.

* * * * * * *

Mr. Hill, Willie and Birdie Merlin soon after started for the United States.

They arrived in safety and sought the seclusion of Manasquan.

Birdie was married to Willie, who entered the ministry and became a popular preacher and useful leader of the church in that section.

Mr. Hill lived for many years to assist and encourage his son in his labors.

Willie and Birdie were the happiest couple in the world—so they thought and said—and they won golden opinions from all who knew them.

THE END.

ORVILLE AND DAN;

Or,

Adventures in Japan.

By COMMODORE AH-LOOK,

Author of "KEEP YOUR BOUNDS," "INVENTIVE DEB," etc.

CHAPTER XXXI.

BENKEI AND BUTTER.

"A *BETTO*," said Orville; "it looks like Captain Costentius, or whatever name he called himself, the wonderful Greco-Romano-Chinese-Tartar who was with Barnum. It ain't paint, Dan; he is tattooed in various colors."

"He's what you call a groom," said Benkei. "Most Japanese who have a trade are tattooed on some part of their body."

"This fellow must have learned a good many, then," grinned Dan; "he's trade-marked all over."

By that time the object of their conversation had halted and backed into the paddy-field, in order to allow them to pass, the road being very narrow.

He was a stout-limbed, good-looking fellow, wearing his hair in pompadour fashion, and a cloth about his loins, while from his forehead downward his entire person was covered with beautiful designs, the crest of his prince being tattooed like a monogram on his brawny back and chest.

In answer to Benkei's questions, he said his name was Kwanoo, and that he was traveling to the Province of Echigo, in which he was about to marry and settle as a tea-cultivator.

He had walked all the way from Tokio, where he had been employed as a groom by the American Minister.

"Was that your uniform?" said Orville, pointing to the man's scanty harness.

"Oh, no," laughingly responded the *betto*. "When I was with my late master I wore better clothes than you do," adding, as he bowed politely, "*Sui-o-nara!*"

The travelers returned his salute and marched on, Orville mentally observing:

"He's smart, isn't he? I guess his outfit was a nicer one than ours. I wonder he didn't buy a decent suit to go home in."

"Ah," sighed Benkei, "if you had never worn many clothes you would understand his feelings. Years ago I used to think it was right of my countrymen to dress lightly, and have a contempt for foreign fashions. I little thought I should one day adopt your manners and customs."

"And sleep with your head to the north?" chuckled Dan.

"And think a dove preferable to a crow as an emblem of love?" insinuated Orville.

"And take with your tea?" said Dan.

"Stop! stop!" cried Benkei; "I will adopt any American drink save that. Please say no more about it."

The party journeyed on for several days, during which time they noticed numerous bamboos driven into the ground on the edges of the fields, but, taking them as a line of boundary-poles, did not learn their use until one evening when they were belated at some distance from a village called Nara.

"Here comes a man who will tell us how far it is," said Benkei, pointing to an old fellow who was sauntering toward them, carrying a long bamboo like a fishing-rod over his shoulder.

"A pleasant rest to you, travelers," said the newcomer, halting, throwing down his burden, lighting his pipe and squatting near them. "From whence do you come? Are you *Mo-gus*?" (Chinese Tartars.)

"No," said Orville, proudly, "we are *Be-koku-jin*." (American men.)

The old fellow grinned at them, and removing his pipe from his toothless gums, drew the back of his horny hand across his wrinkled lips and murmured:

"Well, well! what stories people do tell one! We have been informed you Americans had tails like tigers. I am pleased to see you."

Quite an animated conversation followed, during which the travelers enlightened the agriculturist with regard to American manners and customs; he, as they spoke, rubbing his nose and twitching his ears, though he thought they were trying to deceive him.

"Yes, you must be wonderful folks," he observed. "You cracked the egg of Japan and made the Mikado adopt your fashions. I am glad I have met with you. Now, excuse me, for I am going to illuminate the fields."

"To what?" said Dan.

The aged peasant picked up his pole, and taking a piece of tightly rolled, punk-like paper from his pocket, tied it to the tip of the rod, and after using his flint and steel, blew the little torch into a blaze, then raised it to the top of one of the bamboo-poles, his action firing the coal-gas ascending through the tube from the earth.

As the flame roared and flared out like an enormous gas-burner, he turned to the brothers and said, in a proud voice:

"When you return to your most wonderful nation, you can tell people that you saw, in the Province of Iwashiro, Japan, natural fire issuing from a hollow bamboo stuck in the ground, and that the inhabitants cultivated their fields by these lights."

"It is, that's nothing," laughingly remarked Benkei; "the Americans can bottle fire and carry it anywhere; besides, they use it in their houses instead of oil-lamps or wax-candles."

"Go home, child; you are talking foolishness," was the calm answer. "Don't think because you have rubbed up against two foreigners that you know all about them."

Away trotted the old lamp-lighter, and while the boys were talking they saw the flames burst out in many directions.

Upon resuming their journey they met numbers of people carrying hose and heavy wooden mallets, with which to break the soil, and, stopping one party, Benkei inquired:

"How far is it to Nara, and why do you work at night?"

"It is an hour's walk to the village," answered the foreman of the party. "We work at night because it is cooler, and we can see well. Does it surprise you?"

"Not at all," said Benkei. "We also burn gas where I come from." (Bestering to Yeso.)

The peasant evidently thought Ben was endeavoring to pass himself off as an American, and resented the idea; for he turned up his nose, and, regarding him contemptuously, sneered:

"Oh, my lord foreigner, we poor, simple country folks all bow down to you;" then, changing his tone, shouted: "You think we don't see under your fox's skin, you bald-headed bonze!"

"Stop," said Orville; "you are mistaken in my friend; he is not a bonze, neither is his head bald. He is in the employ of the Mikado."

These words, instead of convincing the rustic, made him yell derisively, and he and his fellows went off making exceedingly personal remarks.

"Ah," sighed Benkei, "you see how ignorant our husbandmen are. In your country things are different. I have read that your farmers read poems and philosophical works and their daughters play on musical instruments."

"Don't you believe it," quietly returned Orville; "most of our farmers work real hard from morning till night, and their gals milk cows and make butter."

"There you go again," shuddered Benkei; "always on that milk question."

"Why, what are you talking about," said Dan; "you ate butter when you staid at Jim Kidder's. Don't you remember, he used to dig it out of an earthen crock with a spoon? You are kicking at a shadow, my friend."

"Was the yellow preserve I tasted there made of milk?" was Benkei's horrified query. "Oh, dear me, dear me! I'm afraid I shall never become Americanized."

That night at the inn in Nara the poor fellow was taken very sick, and the next morning they had to engage a cango in which to convey him to Wakamatsu.

CHAPTER XXXII.

IN WHICH BENKEI COMES UNDER THE DOCTOR'S HANDS.

THE cango was a sort of bamboo hammock, with a pad in the bottom, slung upon a pole carried by two men, its position compelling the traveler to sit doubled up, which was most unpleasant for poor Benkei, who rapidly grew worse. By the time they arrived at Waka-matsu he was delirious, and his face and body were as red as the shell of a boiled lobster.

The city proved to be quite a big place, and the boys experienced some difficulty in discovering the residence of the sufferer's relatives, and when at last they were found, the people denied all knowledge of the young man, and told them to take him to an inn.

This was not done from inhumanity, but because they feared he was an impostor—the Japanese being most kind to their kinsmen.

At first the innkeeper refused to receive the foreigners and their sick companion, and it was not until Orville offered double the usual price for rooms that they succeeded in getting accommodation.

"Now, then," said Dan to their bearers, "while my brother pays the cango-men, you go out and find a doctor, or an old woman, to prescribe for Benkei."

"I can't lie this way," cried the latter, who had been tenderly placed upon the mats. "Don't-trifle with me; my head is to the north. I shall die."

"Let's stew him round," said Dan. "Poor chap, we ought not to have played that trick upon him."

"I believe he's got bilious fever through eating meat," said Orville, regarding the sufferer's red skin.

"When a fellow has been raised on rice and tea, and alters his diet to meat and butter, he must expect it will stir him up. I wish we had some catnip to give him."

"Perhaps he don't," slyly answered Dan. "You forgot he objects to the five foul-smelling plants. I know I've never liked catnip."

"If we only had mother here," murmured Orv, "she'd know how to attend to him."

At the mention of their parent Dan's eyes moistened, and he said:

"Poor mother! You bet she's thinking of us now."

"Yes" nodded Orv, "and so are Rose and Nellie. How I would like to hear from them!"

They had constantly spoken of their parents to Benkei, and no day had passed without their having a chat about home.

"I wish the doctor would come," said Dan.

"Hush," motioned his brother. "Who is that talking outside?"

As he spoke their bearers returned, and the elder one, bowing, said:

"We've fetched the two best physicians in the place, and they are having a row in the corridor. One cures according to our principles, and the other has studied American books."

"Send them in here," said Dan, "and let us hear what they have to say."

The men bowed, retired, and presently returned, followed by the disputants, who quarreled with each other up to the time of entering the patient's room.

One of them had a shaven head like a bonze, and was clad in loose flowing silk robes, bound about the waist with a girdle through which was thrust a sword, while the other was tightly incased in an American-made suit of checked cloth, which gave him the appearance of an animated checker-board, while his hair was brushed up in the scared manner affected by the end-man of a minstrel troupe.

"This," said the servant who had fetched the first one, "is Doctor Kuroda Hoji, the most celebrated physician in the city."

"And I," said the gentleman in the Chatham Street garment, regarding the other doctor ferociously, "am Doctor Hayami Oka. Don't engage that person to cure you, he will kill your friend. I learned my profession according to the American style, and will perform upon your friend's disease with a knife, neither burn, puncture nor disturb the sick man as he will."

Doctor Kuroda did not condescend to notice his fellow-practitioner, but waited in dignified silence for the decision of the brothers.

"What shall we do, Dan?" asked Orville, in English. "This one in Japanese clothes looks as if he were a clever fellow, while I don't know what to make of the other fellow. Ask him whose books he has studied."

This question was duly put to Doctor Hayami, who bobbed his head in a comical fashion and replied:

"I have studied a translation called 'Heimbold's Family Physician,' and have been most successful in treating people," continuing, as he produced a number of documents: "Here are testimonials from my patients."

Orville winked at Dan, and said to the last speaker:

"I tell you what, Doctor Checkers, if we are sick we'll send for you. However, as our friend is a countrymen of yours, we will put him under the charge of this gentleman."

"Oh, very well, very well," sniffed the other. "You'll repent it."

When the eccentric figure had withdrawn, Doctor Kuroda gravely removed his sword and outer robes, and approaching Benkei, began his examination by tapping him with his fingers all over the body.

"Why do you do that?" inquired Dan.

"To locate the position of his malady," said the doctor. "That rascal who has just quitted us is an impostor. A year ago he got his living by fortune-telling; then the people wished to do everything after the American style, so he procured foreign garments and a book of physic, and has played havoc with a number of beautiful constitutions," adding, as he paused in his occupation: "Do your doctors dress in that extraordinary fashion?"

"No," said Dan, "our clowns do. What's the matter with Benkei?"

"This," solemnly replied the physician; "there are two principles in the human body, the hot and the cold; when these are equally balanced the person enjoys perfect health. In your friend's case the heated principle exceeds the cold."

"We know that," said Orv. "He looks red-hot, poor fellow! Has he got a fever?"

"No," was the reply. "He is suffering from the poison of the lacquer-tree. I will guarantee to cure him."

"All right; go ahead," said Dan.

The doctor turned Benkei over on his face, and bidding the boys hold the patient's hands and feet, produced a small box, from which he took a pinch of snuff resembling brown punk; this he laid upon the sufferer's back and ignited with a spark from his flint and steel.

As the smoke curled upward the brothers watched his operations, and Dan inquired if he intended to burn a hole in his friend.

"This is *Mokusa* (moxa), and will cause the poison to collect in one spot," said the doctor. "See"—pointing to scars on the patient's back—"he has been treated thus before."

"But you are hurting him," urged Orville, as Benkei began to writhe with pain.

"I know what I am doing," was the grave answer. "Kindly allow me to continue, or I will retire."

The punk burned down into the skin, and evidently caused Benkei great suffering; however, the doctor did not seem to trouble himself about that, and turning him over, proceeded to puncture his stomach with an instrument made of fine steel points like needles, each stroke raising a lump the size of a copper cent.

"See here," growled Dan to Orville, "shall we stop him? He'll kill poor old Ben."

"I don't know," sorrowfully answered the other. "I guess he's as good as Old Checkerboard, and this is the Japanese way of fixing a fellow when he's sick. It would about finish me."

When the doctor had raised large blisters on his patient's skin, he began to shampoo him; as he did so, uttering cries in the same manner as the top-spinners had done, every now and again slapping the young man's body in a vigorous fashion.

For two hours he alternately kneaded, punched and rolled the unconscious sufferer, while the brothers looked on, expecting every moment to see Benkei draw his last breath.

"Come, gentlemen," said the doctor, turning to them, "will you help me put him into a hot bath? The conflicting principles of his system are now more equally balanced, and after he has been steamed a while he will recover his senses."

They assisted him in raising Ben, and carrying their friend into an adjoining apartment, placed him in a large tub, the water of which scalded the boys' fingers and caused Orville to exclaim:

"See here, you will cook the poor fellow."

"I know my business," was the reply. "Keep him in that until I return with some medicine. You foreigners have no idea of the thirteen great diseases and their various cures."

After he had departed Dan indignantly remarked:

"I think he is a regular quack. That water is hot enough to scald a hog."

To their astonishment, the steaming patient began to perspire about the neck and face, and presently regained his consciousness, his first words being:

"I feel as though I had visited the Buddhists' heaven. Oh! ain't this refreshing!"

"I'm glad you like it, old man," cheerfully answered Orville. "You have been roasted and punctured and punched boiled. Half of what you've gone through would have fixed me. Now don't talk or you'll mix up your elements again."

When the doctor returned he ordered them to lift Benkei from the water and to roll him in a dry sheet, and after he was taken back to the chamber, the physician gave him some tasty pills, then retired, promising to come back before nightfall.

"Where am I?" faintly asked the sick man.

"You are in Waka-matsu," said Dan. "You've been a martyr to the lacquer-poison and Japanese surgery."

"Has the doctor burnt my back well?" feebly inquired Benkei.

"Yes," answered Orv; "he singed right into the flesh."

"And punctured my skin with needles?" continued Ben.

"Yes," nodded his friend; "you've had all the luxuries. He did his very best to kill you, but utterly failed in the attempt. If you are not satisfied, we have another operator ready to try his hand in the European fashion."

The sick man did not seem to understand the import of the remark, and soon dozed off into a deep sleep.

"Dan," whispered Orv, as they watched him, "I've just made a discovery."

"What is it?" breathed his brother.

"That the Japs are bolder Ainos. They were hairy men when they came from the north, and have since for centuries scalded themselves with hot baths until they are smooth all over. They are either Ainos or salamanders."

"Upon my word I think you are right," said Dan. "If you or I had gone through such a course of treatment as our good friend here has enjoyed, we should be in first-class condition for a patent casket, adding, "Listen to the rain."

"Rain!" returned Dan. "I should think a waterspout had emptied over the house. My gracious! how the building shakes!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ORVILLE AND DAN RECEIVE A VISIT FROM THE FATHER OF LITTLE ALLRIGHT.

"SHAKES!" shouted Orville, as the floor undulated beneath them. "It is my opinion this is one of the earthquakes we've heard of."

ORVILLE AND DAN.—"BY THAT TIME THE OBJECT OF THEIR CONVERSATION HAD HALTED AND BACKED INTO THE PADDY-FIELD, IN ORDER TO ALLOW THEM TO PASS, THE ROAD BEING VERY NARROW."—SEE PAGE 311.

As he spoke he endeavored to rise, but was thrown violently upon his brother, while a waitress who was passing the door with a tray full of dishes was shot violently into the apartment and landed in the further corner.

"What do you call this?" demanded Dan, as he assisted her to regain her feet. "Are you not frightened?"

"Oh, no," she coolly replied, picking up the broken earthenware; "it's mere fun to what we have sometimes."

At that instant the walls began to crack and the ceilings to split in various directions, letting in the streams of water.

Noticing which, she calmly remarked:

"Oh! this is most excellent for my father. He has been praying for rain for the last three weeks—his rice crop was drying up."

Her remarks were cut short by an awful convulsion that made the boys feel as though they were seasick, and, when they recovered the servant had departed.

The earthquake lasted for several hours, during which time it rained in torrents, and, when the morning dawned the boys looked into the street and saw the flood was up to the edge of the veranda.

All through the night they had crouched by their friend, over whom they had held paper umbrellas, and thus kept him tolerably dry. When the landlord brought in their breakfast he inquired how Benkei was.

"He's still fast asleep," said Orville. "I believe the doctor gave him a narcotic. Can't you let us have a dry room? This place is all afloat."

"That is nothing," he merrily answered. "In the street below us the people have had to climb on to the roofs of the houses. The water will soon go down, and then we will dry the place.

The boys grumbled at their unpleasant position. However, there was no help for it, so they had to make the best of matters. While they were eating their meal an attendant brought in a paper and told them a visitor was waiting to see them in the corridor.

"Send him in," said Orv; "I did not know we had any acquaintances in this place."

The servant beckoned the stranger to approach, and there entered a venerable, ancient-looking man, who, after regarding them attentively, inquired:

"Are you Americans?"

"Yes," was the reply; "what can we do for you?"

"I am the father of a young man who is in your country," said the old gentleman, putting on a pair of horn spectacles that made him look like an owl. "He has been so well treated that I wish to show you some kindness. I suppose you know him; he has traveled all over your land."

"What is his name?" politely inquired Orville.

"Kikuchi Tomi," gravely answered the man. "He is known to you as Little Allright. I sold him to an acrobat for five years, and he has become quite a famous person."

"Oh, we've seen him," said Dan; "though we never had the pleasure of being introduced. He's quite famous in the United States."

"Yes," proudly nodded Kikuchi; "he has done credit to his master's teaching, and has sent me home plenty of money. My object in calling upon you is to offer the hospitality of my house. I am a dealer in mermaids."

"Excuse me," said Dan; "what did you say?"

The old fellow repeated his words, and urged the boys to take up their residence with him; but they declined, not wishing to become the guest of a man who had sold his own son into slavery.

"I am sorry," he remarked, as he rose preparatory to taking his leave. "At least you must pay me visit and see my mermaids. I've got the best lot in the Empire, and only the other day shipped a magnificent specimen to your Tycoon Barnum. They are all fresh from the sea, or from Lake Biwa."

"You are fooling us, are you not?" said Orville.

"No, no," he said. "I had an order from New York through a merchant in Tokio, and it was not the first mermaid I had sent to your country. Good-morning."

"We must call on that old chap," said Orv. "He has excited my curiosity. I always thought mermaids were a myth."

By noon the mats were dried and everything aired, and Benkei had aroused from his slumber.

"How do you feel?" inquired Dan. "You look shaky, old chum. You ought to have eaten some garlic."

"I must get the doctor to fix me again," said Ben, fumbling at his back. "I always put on two *mokusa*; one is no good to me. Garlic! phewgh! Being burnt is nothing to eating that!"

"You don't tell me?" said Orville. "We felt terribly bad when we saw him operating upon you. He acted as though you were made of iron."

"It is no good playing with a sickness," was the grave rejoinder. "When a person is in my condition you must use violent measures, and either kill or cure him. This doctor is a most accomplished man, and would make a great deal of money if he were to visit your country."

"I doubt it," said Orv. "We are well supplied with butchers in the States. If one of our surgeons served me in that style, I should feel like going for him. I wonder you can stand such rough treatment; our doctors left it off about five hundred years ago."

"Now you are joking," faintly remarked the sick man. "Your nation isn't much over a hundred years old."

"That's one for you, Orv," chuckled Dan. "Benkei knows more of American history than we do of Japanese."

"Yes," dryly observed the patient, "there isn't so much of it to learn."

"Good-morning to you, my friends," said the doctor, entering the room. "I was unable to return here last night."

"We didn't expect you to come when that earthquake was on," said Orville. "How do you think Benkei is getting along?"

The physician examined him, and at Ben's request burned another moxa on his back; after which he shpooced him for a time, and when the process was over, solemnly remarked to the boys:

"A week of this treatment and he will be perfectly convalescent."

"I hope your prediction will come true," said Dan, with a puzzled air. "You must be made differently from what Americans are."

"You are perfectly correct," was the grave reply. "We Japanese are the finest people in the world; our elements are beautifully balanced. Do you not acknowledge that?"

"Give it up," sighed the boy. "I never was good at conundrums."

"Do you believe in the circulation of the blood?" inquired Orville.

"Yes, when you cut yourself," was the conceited answer. "We have heard about such folly, but know better."

"Good land alive!" moaned Dan, in English; "it is no use talking to him. He'll tell us presently that our hearts are in the middle of our stomachs."

"I don't mind it he'll only cure Ben," replied Orv. "He isn't worse than some of our quacks."

When the physician had retired they told Benkei about the visit of Mr. Kikuchi, and asked if there were really any mermaids in Japan.

"Of course there are," said Benkei. "I have seen lots of them, although they are becoming scarcer every year. Mr. Kikuchi is very well known. He used to supply our temple. It will be worth your while to go and see him. Don't mind me; I can attend to myself, and mean to take a hot bath presently."

"Well, you beat everything," said Dan. "Come along, Orv; we will ask the landlord to tell us the way to the mermaid dealer's."

They found their host in the tea-room, and on telling him what they wanted, he took them aside and whispered, confidentially:

"If you wish to see beautiful mermaids, don't go to that sly rascal, Kikuchi; let me recommend you to my brother, who has nice fresh ones that are lovely to look at."

The lads declined his advice, and, having obtained the necessary directions, walked off, leaving the landlord muttering to himself:

"Those foreigners are so smart they won't let an honest man make a little commission out of them."

Thanks to the constant tuition of Benkei, the brothers could speak Japanese with great fluency; though the writing of the country was still a profound mystery to them.

This is the street of the curriers and leather-dressers, is it not?" asked Orville of a passer-by.

"Yes," was the polite response. "Whom do you wish to find?"

"Mr. Kikuchi," said Orville.

The man pointed to a building opposite, and, translating the sign suspended up and down the door-post, continued:

"Royal Mermaids from the Inland Sea and Lake Biwa, by Kikuchi Tomi, the parent. Orders supplied by wholesale or retail. Take notice: The mermaids purchased at this establishment warranted fresh out of the water."

"Come along, brother," said Orv. "Let us go and see the critters. This caps all we've met yet."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE BROTHERS ARE INTRODUCED TO A JAPANESE MERMAID.

UNLIKE ourselves, the Japanese storekeepers make very little show of their goods, the reason being they have no glass windows, and if their wares were exposed to the street they would soon be ruined by the dust and rain. This does not apply to cities like Tokio and Yokohama, where some of the stores rival those on Broadway.

As for Mr. Kikuchi's establishment, it looked like an ordinary Japanese house with the shutters of the front-room removed, showing the interior of the apartment, two walls of which were lined with neatly labeled wooden boxes, while the mermaid-dealer was crouched in the centre of the store, smoking a little brass pipe and making calculations by the aid of an *Abacus*—an oblong frame in which are secured a number of wires strung with black wooden beads.

He was so deeply occupied in moving the balls backward and forward that he failed to notice the approach of his visitors; however, when they spoke, he raised his head, removed his pipe from between his toothless jaws, and prostrating himself upon the floor, exclaimed:

"Now I am very much honored," then rising, called to his wife in the rear apartment: "Obun" (Tea-tray, a woman's name), "come here and see our boy's friends."

In response to this order there appeared an old lady, who was even more withered than her husband, and who, on seeing the brothers, dropped upon her hands and knees and saluted them as he had done, after which the party rose, put on a pair of round-rimmed spectacles, calmly surveyed them from head to foot, and that done, remarked:

"How was the health of my son when you last saw him, and where was he?"

"He seemed pretty spry, old lady," politely answered Orville. "We saw him performing with the Jacket ski-high troupe in our Town Hall. He was perched in a tub, balanced on the top of a forty-foot ladder, fanning himself and yelling like everything."

"Ah!" she cried, smacking her gums together with a peculiar noise. "He is a beautiful child, is my Tomi. Come and I will show you a picture of him."

The lads followed her into a back apartment, the walls of which were neatly papered with big posters, printed in New York, representing Little Allright performing his various feats.

"This looks like home, don't it, Dan?" whispered Orv, as he read the headings. "For one night only, the celebrated Japanese Troupe, late in the employ of his Imperial Majesty the Tycoon. Little Allright, the Wonder of the Age."

"There," exclaimed the old lady, pointing to a bill depicting her son, standing head downward on an enormous tub, balanced on the uplifted feet of a prostrate Jap. "Is he not a *Tenjin*?" (Angel).

"Yes, according to your ideas, no doubt he is," said Orv. "To my mind he looks like a first-class acrobat. I wonder, as you are so fond of him, you found it in your heart to sell such a good-looking little chap?"

"Why, he was proud to go," she said, with a surprised air. "Surely if your parents were poor you would be delighted to help them. Tomi would have considered himself dishonored if he had not been permitted to do what he did. When he sacrificed himself we owed a big bill for monkey and salmon-skins."

"Schist! schist!" cautioned her husband, who had followed them. "Women should not talk too much."

His exclamation caused the old lady to pat her forehead—a Japanese gesture signifying annoyance at having betrayed a secret—and to peep out the corners of her eyes at her lord, then flopping down upon her hands and knees, she bowed her head to the mat and murmured:

"*Namu Amida Budsu!*" (Hail, great Buddha!)

"Why does she do that?" demanded Dan. "Surely she doesn't worship those posters, does she?"

"Yes," gravely replied her husband, motioning them to leave her; "Obun is a very pious woman, and daily repeats her prayers to each of those pictures. It pleases her, and keeps the good creature from talking about my affairs to the neighbors."

"Do you indulge in the ceremony?" said Orv.

The old fellow puckered his face into a comical smile, and when they had seated themselves upon the floor of the store he produced a box of imperial photographs of Little Allright and American celebrities, remarking as he did so:

"I am a Shinto; I do not say my prayers to pictures."

Orville and Dan examined the collection, and said some complimentary things about his son, to which the parent answered:

"Yes, he is a good boy. Now can you tell me what this ink-smudge means on the back of this card?"

"It says Barony," answered Dan. "That photograph," pointing to a caricature of the celebrated artist, "is a picture of the great man himself, from a sketch by Nast."

Mr. Kikuchi held the card out at arm's length, and, regarding it with great admiration, observed:

"Thank you for your information. I took it for a portrait of one of your *Tengu*, and thought of making it a present to the temple where my wife worships."

The lads laughed at his remark, and advised him to carry out his intention, then inquired if he would show them his mermaids.

Instead of opening a door and conducting the brothers into a room provided with a tank of water in which were disporting beautiful beings—half human half fish—the old gentleman shuffled upon his knees to one side of the room, reached down a box, carefully dusted it, and remarked:

"This lovely creature is the gem of my collection."

The boys exchanged glances, and Dan murmured:

"How?"

Once more the merchant tenderly wiped the case, and, removing the lid, exhibited a stuffed monster, with the head and arms of a monkey and the body of a fish.

"There," he triumphantly exclaimed, regarding them through his glasses; "what do you think of that for a mermaid?"

"Well, if you desire my candid opinion," said the disgusted Orville, "I think it's the biggest fraud I ever came across."

"Fraud!" gasped the man. "Why, these things are worshiped in the Buddhist temples. Do you wish to take away an honest man's living? This is the original mermaid who appeared to the person in the thirty-third tableau of Kusuno, as you will see in the temple at Asakusa. I wouldn't part with her for all the money I possess."

WANDERING WILLIE.—"WILLIE CLASPED HER IN HIS ARMS AND IMPRINTED SWEET KISSES ON HER LIVID LIPS."—SEE PAGE 310.

"Well," good-humoredly inquired Dan. "If she is the original Jacobs, what are all the others in those boxes?"

The exasperated old man made a gesture of rage, and, waving his hand toward the cases, indignantly replied:

"They are the sisters, and the cousins, and the grandmothers and the aunts of this one. Do you think I would misinform you? My son wrote me if any of you Americans came to this country you would poke your noses into everything."

"Then why did you invite us to visit you?" quietly asked Orville.

"Because I thought you would be good customers," said Kikuchi. "You don't think I had any personal affection for you, do you? I am a man of business—I am!"

"You can't play our monkey-and-salmon skin off on to us for mermaids," said Dan.

For a moment the old rascal's teeth chattered as though he had the ague; then catching up a bamboo that lay on the floor, he sprang to his feet, rushed into the back room and began to beat his wife; whereupon the boys interfered in her behalf, when, instead of thanking them, she joined with her husband and drove their visitors into the street.

The lads sauntered about and laughed over their adventure, which they determined not to relate to Benkei.

"How Japanese superstitions melt before the superior knowledge of us foreigners," said Dan, in a conceited tone. "In a few years our missionaries will change all this."

"I don't know," chuckled Orv; "they'll find it difficult to operate on such a dyed-in-the-wool sinner as Kikuchi."

As he spoke, the landlord of their inn advanced to them, crying, excitedly:

"Come home at once; your friend is dying."

(To be continued.)

"Orville and Dan" was commenced in No. 657.

Distinguished Scholars of Brooklyn (N. Y.) Schools.

PATRICK MORIARTY,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 17, NORTH FIFTH STREET, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

PATRICK MORIARTY is a talented pupil of the first class of Grammar School No. 17, North Fifth Street, Brooklyn, N. Y. "From term to term I offer a prize to the best scholar," said Mr. Woodward, the venerable Principal of the school, "and Moriarty has taken most of them. I regard him as a very bright boy." An investigation of his record showed that he was making one hundred per cent. at the time of his last examination. Altogether he is undoubtedly one of the most promising pupils at present in the Brooklyn schools, for his standing is not only high in his own, but will compare favorably with that of any boy elsewhere. He was born in Brooklyn, January 3d, 1866, making him in his fourteenth year. He is the son of John and Margaret Moriarty. He first attended school in the Primary Department of No. 1, where he advanced to the first class in those studies. Next he entered his present school in the seventh grammar class, and has gone by regular promotions to the highest. In every class he has shown most intelligent application. His attendance has been regular, and he has exhibited the utmost interest in his studies. His teachers have always felt repaid by his great improvement for all their efforts with him. He has an amiable and intelligent face. As a pupil he is making a reputation which will be his best aid when he enters manhood.

ANNIE B. RITCH,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 34, NORMAN AVENUE, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

ANNIE B. RITCH is a most intelligent and interesting girl who has won all hearts in the classes of Grammar School No. 34, Norman Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y. She was born in that city, June 16th, 1867, making her twelve years of age. She is the daughter of William H. and Hester L. Ritch. She has never attended any school except the one in which she is now so highly esteemed, both for her studiousness and her beautiful character. Commencing in the primary studies, she has now advanced as high as the third grammar class. She makes one hundred per cent., and is in all respects a model pupil. It is very pleasant to watch her from day to day. Her interest in the different studies is intense, and her efforts to reach perfection are most painstaking, while her success is a source of the greatest joy to her. She has a large head, with fine expressive eyes. Her broad forehead shows that she has more than the ordinary mental powers, and her standing in both the lower and upper classes is proof that she not only makes good use of them, but that they are constantly expanding. Her bright and pretty face is an endeared one in every class, and when she goes from it, always with her well-earned honors, she leaves a place which few are found to fill. Gentle, modest and intellectual, this girl promises to hold throughout her school career the highest rank in all study, as well as the loving regard of both teachers and classmates.

MINNIE'S RESCUE FROM THE WILDS OF SIBERIA.—"AS SOON AS THE CHUCHCHEES HAD BEEN PUT TO FLIGHT A COUPLE OF THE ESKUCKE WARRIORS RODE UP TO THE ROCKS."

MINNIE'S RESCUE FROM THE WILDS OF SIBERIA;

Or,

The Daring Adventures of Two Brave Boys.

By ROGER STARBUCK.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DISAPPEARANCE.

THE three fugitives looked at each other. Minnie was pale, and leaned against the tree for support.

"You are not hurt?" said Brian.

"No, not at all, thanks to Mr. Warren."

"It was a cool piece of work," said Brian, shaking hands with Will.

"It was the only way to prevent Miss Lewis from falling."

The young girl, forcing a smile and with a slight return of color in her cheeks, now advanced and thanked the boy for his exertions in her behalf.

Then the three ran to the edge of the precipice and looked over.

Nearly a hundred and fifty feet below them, on a pile of sharp, jagged rocks, lay the mangled bodies of the two horses, and near them, broken in twain, was the tarantass.

The three exchanged glances and shuddered as they thought of their narrow escape.

"What shall we do now?" said Brian.

"We must try to reach the coast, which cannot be more than twenty miles off," said Will. "We may then be picked up by some friendly American captain."

"Yes, that is the best we can do," said Brian.

"It will be a hard task for your sister," said Will.

The young English girl smiled. She was a good pedestrian, and being healthy, supple, and recuperative, she could easily perform the journey.

"You need have no concern for me," she said. "I am a good walker."

"We had better start at once," said Brian; "but we must not follow the road, lest we be discovered and captured. Lofski will soon have, if he has not already obtained, a party in search of us."

They then commenced their journey.

Minnie had not been long enough in this part of the country to give them directions as to their route.

Hills, rocks, valleys and swamps were encountered, but they pressed steadily on.

All at once they heard a shout.

Looking in the direction of the noise, they saw a party of mounted Cossacks on a hill in the distance behind them.

They were evidently men whom Peter and his father had met, and had sent on a search for the fugitives.

They did not, however, as yet see the latter, who were hidden by the shadows of a grove in which they stood.

The shouts of the party were evidently meant for two of their companions, who were searching a thicket ahead of them.

At length, these having rejoined the main body, away they went, disappearing over the brow of the hill.

The trio then left the thicket and kept on. At sundown Will shot a duck, and a pause was made for supper.

It was soon cooked.

Will found a log for Minnie to sit on, and placing himself by her side, he was permitted to feed her with some of the duck, which he did by presenting morsels to her on the end of his knife.

She had an excellent appetite, and seemed to enjoy, with childish zest, the fun of being fed in this manner.

The woods and the rocks rang with her silvery laughter, and it seemed to Will that he could never tire of hearing her, or of gazing on her smooth, glowing cheeks.

Having finished her meal, she rose, like a true English girl, as fresh as when she started, and said she was prepared to go on whenever her companions were ready.

Will looked at her with blended admiration and surprise.

True the full, rounded form, the well-poised head, the breadth of the sloping shoulders, and the clear, azure eyes, indicated health, strength and spirit; but the boy was unaccustomed to women who could walk their ten miles, and then seem ready to "foot it" another ten.

In fact, he had been used to seeing the other sex languish on a walk, after their first mile, or not walk at all when they could possibly help it.

"You must be very tired, Miss Lewis," he said to the young girl. "Brian and I might make a sort of stretcher of boughs, and carry you on it."

Minnie smiled.

"Thank you, sir," she said, pleasantly, with a slight toss of the head, "but I am not tired."

They proceeded on their way until dark.

Suddenly Brian paused.

"Did you hear nothing?" he said to his companions.

"Not I," said Will.

"Nor I," chimed in Minnie.

"It was a sort of crackling sound, as if some person or animal was following us."

Will ran back and searched.

He could see nothing, however, to account for the noise heard.

But it was growing dark and the woods and rocky hollows were full of shadows.

The little party kept on, Brian now and then directing a wary glance behind him.

At last the three paused in a valley where there were a few trees, some rocks, and a clear stream.

"Here we will rest for the night," said Brian.

Will procured boughs and made a soft couch for Minnie in the sheltered hollow of a rock.

She expressed herself as much pleased with her bed when she saw it, and as she had a cloak with her which she had thrown from the carriage ere she was lowered from it by Will, she was enabled to make herself comfortable when she retired for the night.

Will stretched himself on the moss by the stream, and sank into a deep slumber, while Brian stood the first watch.

As he walked to and fro, the latter suddenly became aware of a strange feeling of drowsiness stealing over him.

He struggled against it, but to no purpose.

Then he remembered that he had eaten some berries from a bush he had passed, supposing them to be the blueberries which at this season are found in Siberia.

Now, however, he began to think that he had made some mistake—that he had partaken of a certain fruit which grows in this country, and is said to produce sleep.

In fact, this conviction had scarcely crossed his mind when his heavy eyelids closed, his head drooped upon his shoulder, he sank to the ground, and with his arms bent under his forehead, he dropped into a profound slumber.

The sun was shining brightly when he awoke.

He looked at the place where Will had lain, and was surprised to perceive that he was gone.

All at once, however, he heard the report of the pistol, and soon after he beheld the youth approaching with a duck which he had shot.

"Here's our breakfast," said Will, as he drew nearer and tossed the duck at Brian's feet.

"And I have a good appetite for it," Brian said.

"I should think you might, after sleeping so soundly. It was a perilous game you played. You should have kept awake while on guard."

"By my faith! I should have done so," said Brian, "had I been able; but I must have eaten something to make me drowsy, for I fell off before I knew it."

A fire was made, and the duck having been prepared, soon began to simmer.

"We will have a nice breakfast for Minnie when she awakes," said Will.

"Ay; but you may not expect her to awaken under an hour, at least."

"She may be awake, now," said Will. "Won't you please to go and see?"

"Yes; but if she is asleep, I will let her sleep on," said Brian.

He went to the rocky hollow. The bed of branches was there, but the young girl was gone!

"Minnie! Minnie! Where are you," called the youth.

There was no reply.

Will stood staring at his friend like one stupefied.

"Gone! Impossible!" he cried.

"You can come and see for yourself," said the other.

Will ran to the hollow and looked in.

Perceiving it was empty, he staggered back, and, for a moment, became dizzy with the feeling of dismay that came over him.

"You have not seen her this morning?" queried Brian.

"I? No. God only knows what can have become of her!"

"Cheer up," said Brian, his face lighting. "She may have gone into the thicket. Perhaps she went there before you were awake, just to look a little around her."

"I have been in the thicket," said Will, "and I feel quite sure she is not there. Had she been there, I would have met her."

"It is very strange," said Brian.

Will became as pale as death.

A horrid thought entered his mind.

"What if some wild beast came at night, killed her, and dragged her off?" he cried.

Brian threw a quick glance at the grass on the ground.

"No," said he, "that could not have happened. There would be blood and other signs, had it been so."

The boys looked at each other a moment; then, as if with one accord, they rushed into the thicket and searched hither and thither for some trace of the lost girl.

But they searched in vain.

Will was half distracted, and Brian not less so, although the latter was able to preserve a calmer demeanor. All at once Brian paused.

"I remember, now, that I heard a noise as of some person following behind us, yesterday, after sundown."

"Yes, you said so; but we looked without being able to find a soul."

"I know it; still there might have been some person, and, as it was rather dark, he might have concealed himself effectually. When we resumed our journey he may have followed us and have bidden until we were asleep; then he may have pounced on Minnie and have carried her off."

"How could he have done so alone without our being awakened by her cries?"

PATRICK MORIARTY, PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 17, NORTH FIFTH STREET, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

ANNIE B. RITCH, PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 34, NORMAN AVENUE, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

"A gag would have prevented her from crying out."

"True enough."

"We will have breakfast and then we will continue the search."

"Breakfast! How can you think of that at such a time?"

Brian laid his hand on his friend's shoulder.

"In order to keep our strength, we must eat. It will help us to hunt for my sister."

Will followed his companion to the fire, where the duck was being roasted.

When it was done Brian ate with a keen relish, notwithstanding his anxiety about Minnie.

Will, on the contrary, scarcely tasted of his food.

When the meal was finished the boys continued the search.

But all their efforts were unsuccessful.

They could not discover even a trace of the missing girl.

At sundown they found themselves in a thick pine-forest.

There they passed the night.

On the next day, having made a meal of a rabbit, they continued their fruitless hunt for Minnie.

They could form no idea of their locality.

Around them on all sides stretched the dark pine-forests.

The roaring of the wind amongst the swaying branches was like the noise of the sea in a storm.

In the distance they could hear now and then the howling of wolves and the hoarse growling of some other animal, either a bear or a wild boar.

They stood still at last and looked at each other.

Will's face was the very picture of woe, but Brian's bore that look of calm gravity natural to his countrymen.

Nevertheless, he suffered deeply.

"What shall we do now?" he said to Will.

"Make our way to Okhotsk, at all hazards," answered Will, "and learn if Miss Lewis is at that place."

"I dare say she is there by this time," said Brian. "It is the conviction that no harm has befallen her which has buoyed me up thus far. I believe that it was some one of the people hired by Lofski that took her away, and that she is now with her uncle."

"To make sure of that, we must go to Okhotsk."

"If we can get there," said Brian, looking dubiously around him. "But I am afraid that we are now so far in the interior that we will never find our way back."

"We can try," said Will.

And so the boys kept on.

For two days they were in the shadows of the forest; at the end of that time they emerged from it, to find themselves near a range of rugged hills.

"We will never get to Okhotsk," said Brian.

"I am afraid not," answered Will.

In fact, the twain were far in the interior of the Siberian wilds!

They had lost their way.

Afar they saw the outlines of another forest, and beyond that the tops of lofty hills, that seemed to pierce the dark clouds which had covered the heavens ever since the day when Minnie was first missed.

Still they journeyed on.

For days they endeavored to extricate themselves from the woods.

But in vain.

The further they advanced the deeper did they seem to plunge into the wilderness.

One morning they beheld a group of horsemen approaching.

Will had but little ammunition left.

He loaded both barrels of his pistol carefully, and Brian stood ready to draw his sword.

The horsemen came on.

When they were nearer, the boys perceived that they were not Cossacks.

They, however, had the usual elongated eyes and cat-shaped faces of all the Siberian tribes.

They were armed with lances, and had guns slung over their shoulders.

Their garments consisted of deerskin frocks and leggins, and some of them had large rings of bone in their ears.

The leader of this party halted within a few paces of the boys, and spoke to them in a dialect which they could not understand.

Will shook his head to signify as much.

The leader then called to one of his party—a short, broad-shouldered native—who advanced.

"Englese?" he said, inquiringly.

"Yes," answered Brian.

"What e do here?"

"We are lost."

"Where e want to go?"

"To Okhotsk."

The man shook his head.

"Too far for boy," said he, pointing toward the distant horizon.

The party had all lowered their lances, as if to show that they entertained no hostile feeling toward the young travelers.

Then the leader said something to the interpreter, who now turned again to the boys.

"You go with us?" said he.

"Where?"

"To tent. Give rest—give eat."

The interpreter seemed to speak in good faith.

But the boys exchanged doubtful glances.

"No fraid! No hurt!" said the interpreter. "Chuckchees no hurt."

He spoke so earnestly that the two wanderers could no longer doubt his good intentions.

"We will go with you," said Brian.

Instantly the interpreter pointed to the back of his horse.

"One get here; other get there!" pointing to another horseman.

The boys understood that he meant for each of them to ride behind a mounted Chuckchee.

Will got up behind the interpreter, and Brian behind the chief.

In this manner they rode off with the party.

They had proceeded some distance when, all at once, a band of fierce-looking men, like Tartars, emerged like the wind from behind a hill, mounted on fleet horses.

"Zunguze!" shouted the interpreter to Will.

"Will they attack us?" said Brian, much surprised.

"Yes," said the interpreter. "Chuckchee chief carry off daughter of Zunguze chief and make wife. Zunguze no like; he fight Chuckchees. If give up daughter, no fight; but never give up, so fight every time meet."

Will drew his pistol and cocked it.

Brian pulled his sword from its sheath.

"We may have to help you, I suppose," he said to the interpreter.

"Yes; if not, Zunguze quick kill. Kill because with us."

"We will see about that," said Brian; "but we don't care to fight except to defend ourselves. We will stand to one side while you are fighting, and if those fellows attack us, then we will have to join the combat; otherwise, we prefer to remain neutral."

As he spoke he leaped from the horse, and Will also got down from his perch.

No objection was made by the Chuckchees to this movement.

The boys posted themselves on a rising bit of ground, partially shaded by trees, and awaited the result.

The charge of the Zunguze was as swift as a whirlwind.

Their couched lances met those of the Chuckchees, and the combat commenced in good earnest.

Both parties fought with spirit.

Many on both sides were wounded and unhorsed.

A Zunguze dashed at full speed toward the Chuckchee chief.

The latter, at the time, was fighting desperately with one of his enemies, and the lance of the warrior, who had just come up, passed clean through his body.

"The Chuckchees are getting the worst of it," said Brian, as the chief, with a yell, threw up both hands and tumbled from his horse.

"Yes, there go two of them scudding off; the rest will soon follow."

"True; and I think we had better make off, too. Suppose we go down there among the rocks and get out of sight? They have evidently perceived that we are neutral and not of the tribe, and I do not see why they should molest us."

The boys hurried to the rocks, and sat down in a hollow, thinking that the Zunguze would not come to look for them.

But they were mistaken.

As soon as the Chuckchees had been put to flight a couple of the Zunguze warriors rode up to the rocks.

One of them, who could speak broken English, called to the boys, in a loud voice, to come forth.

"What do you want with us?" said Brian. "You have nothing to do with us. We are Englishmen!"

"Must come out."

As the man spoke a number of his comrades galloped up.

A dozen guns covered the bodies of the boys.

Resistance was useless.

They both stepped out from among the rocks.

One of the men possessed himself of Brian's sword; another took away Will's pistol.

Surrounding the boys, they looked at them keenly.

"What are you going to do with us?" said Brian, much chagrined.

"Exile!" said the person who had previously spoken.

"No; far from it," said Will. "We got lost in the wilds. Your best plan would be to tell us how to reach the seacoast and to let us go."

The horsemen held a consultation.

At length one of them said to Will:

"Got money?—rouble and copecks?"

Brian took some pieces of gold from his pocket.

"I will give you this if you will let us go."

Instantly the youth was surrounded and seized.

The gold was taken from him, and his pockets were rifled for more.

He was robbed of all the money he had about him.

"Confounded rascals!" he cried.

Unable to control his indignation, he struck one the Zunguze, who had his dirty, greasy-looking hand on the back of his neck.

The blow was a powerful one, which almost knocked the man from his horse.

He gave a yell, and struck the youth in the face with the butt of a pistol.

"I was wrong to give way to your temper at such a time," said Will to Brian, dealing the horseman a blow one the temple that made him fall from his saddle.

Several of the Zunguze threw themselves upon him, and hurled him to the ground and struck him.

Both the boys were then forced to mount captured horses, and, surrounded by some of the band, they were made to ride forward.

It was evident to them that the Zunguze mistook them for escaped exiles, for they still wore over their other clothes the light skin garb which they had obtained from the hut.

They did their utmost to undeceive them, but in vain.

Their captors would not believe them when they stated that they had traveled into the interior from the seacoast.

They had proceeded a long distance ere they halted in a sort of encampment, which in Siberia is called a *yourt*.

This consisted of several tents made of light frames, rounded at the top and covered with felt, having an opening in the centre for the escape of the smoke.

Through the entrances the boys could see women and children seated on mats and skins.

The twain were made to dismount, when they were bound beneath a tree, and their hands having been tied behind their backs with thongs, they were left there under the charge of a couple of men, who acted as a guard.

Soon coarse provisions were brought to them by a young woman of about seventeen.

There was some black bread, and there was also a bottle of milk.

"Your bread is not very inviting," said Brian to the girl.

She looked grave, but made no answer.

"How can we eat it with our hands tied behind our backs?" said Will.

The young woman spoke to the guard, who at once unfastened the thongs from the wrists of the prisoners.

Brian fancied he could detect a look of pity in the eyes of the girl, as he and his friend partook of the bread.

She was a fine-looking person, with large, soft black eyes, and long, dark hair. Her teeth, which were even and as white as snow, were visible every time she smiled, giving a peculiarly attractive expression to her face.

She had less of the Mongol look than any of her tribe, her face being oval in shape and her skin almost fair.

"You speak English?" said Brian.

The girl started; something in the expression of the young man's face, or a sound in the tone of his voice, seemed to attract her attention.

"Yes," she replied; "my mother was French."

Both the boys looked up, surprised at hearing her speak such good English.

"French?"

"Yes, but she is dead now; she died when I was a child."

"Then how did you learn to speak English so well? Your mother having been French could have nothing to do with that."

"She could speak English well. She taught it to me, but she died before I could learn it as I wished. My father is the chief of this band. After my mother died he allowed a Russian to take me very often to his house to amuse his little niece, who was an English girl. It was by being in her company that I learned the language so well."

Brian and his friend exchanged glances.

"Where was this?" inquired the former.

"At Nerchinsk," said the girl.

"And what was the name of your English friend?"

"Minnie," replied the young woman.

"And her uncle's name was Lofski?"

"Yes; but how did you know that?" inquired the girl.

"She is my sister," said Brian, in a low voice, at the same time glancing askance at the guard.

"He does not understand a word of English," said the girl, alluding to that person.

She looked steadily and softly at Brian for a moment and then went on:

"I am not surprised to learn that Minnie is your sister," she said. "Her likeness is in your face. I noticed it the first thing."

The pleasant manner of the speaker, and a certain sympathizing expression in her eyes, encouraged Brian to go on and tell his whole story.

The girl listened with close attention.

When he had finished both the story and his meal, she said something to the guard, who again fastened the arms of the prisoners behind their backs.

Brian was much disappointed.

"I am afraid she is against us, after all," he said.

"She will contrive to have us surrendered to the Russians."

"You should not have told your story to her," said Will.

These words were spoken in a low voice, but they evidently reached the quick ears of the girl, for a slight smile now hovered about her pretty mouth.

She turned from the two without a word, and hurried off.

"She will tell her father, and then all hope of our escaping will be at an end," said Brian.

"As you were smuggling the trunk with her," said Will. "In this world it is best to be a little reserved about our affairs."

CHAPTER X.

OFF.

HOURS passed. The shadows of night at last began to close around the two friends, who still sat with their hands tied behind their backs.

It was a painful, irksome position, and the boys hoped that the chief would soon appear and relieve them from it.

As the gloom increased, the guard was relieved by one of his companions—a tall fellow with a long spear.

This man, pacing to and fro, occasionally left the prisoners across a few yards behind him.

"If it was not for both our hands and feet being tied," said Brian, "we might get up and make off in the dark."

"That is true. The rascals knew what they were about when they tied our feet just as the gloom was being rifled for money on us."

"Hist! hist!" came a low voice behind them. "Lie perfectly still, while I cut your thongs. Make no movement, and do not utter a word. After I have freed your limbs, roll over toward the rock near which I am crouched, get behind it, and then jump up and away straight forward. You will find a couple of horses ready for you. Mount them and make off. I will join you and direct you on the best route by which you can escape."

Both boys felt the blood fairly leap in their veins.

They recognized the voice of the chief's daughter, and they now comprehended that she had not previously helped them from fear of being discovered and thwarted.

As she spoke they saw the outlines of an extended arm and of a knife.

Their bonds the next moment were severed, and their limbs were free.

They looked toward the guard, who, still some distance from them, had not yet turned to retrace his steps toward them.

They rolled quickly over toward the rock, which was not two feet from them, got behind it, and then sprang up and darted off like the wind.

"There they are," said Brian, pointing out the dim outlines of the horses, not far ahead.

The boys were soon close to the animals, which stood motionless with elevated heads, their soft, dark eyes shining through the gloom, as if in expectation of what was about to happen.

Brian sprang upon one and Will mounted the other.

Both boys were good equestrians, especially Brian, who had always been fond of riding horses.

Away they went, taking a direction opposite to the *yourt*.

They had not proceeded far when a light form swept past them like the wind.

It was the Zunguze maiden, mounted on a coal-black charger, which, however, was but dimly visible in the intense gloom.

The long hair of the girl, as she swept past, streamed on the breeze.

"Follow me!" she cried, as she went by.

"All right!" answered Brian.

She dashed on until she was about five yards ahead of the boys, when she kept this distance from them, in order that they might see her, so as to follow on her track.

Soon after, the moon rose, and then the girl was plainly revealed to them.

There she was, seated with a free, careless grace on her steed, which she had been trained to ride from childhood.

The animal obeyed her slightest tone.

Whenever she spoke, it would arch its neck and prick up its ears, as if glad to hear her voice.

"That girl is a beautiful creature," said Brian.

"Do you think so?"

"How can I help it?"

Will smiled, and then changed the subject.

"I hear no noise of pursuit behind us. I should think our flight would have been discovered before now."

"Yes, I do not understand it myself."

Both boys quickened their pace, and rode up on each side of the girl.

"We are not pursued," said Will.

A deep glow overspread the cheeks of the girl.

"No, Selimok has his instructions from me."

"And who is Selimok?"

"He is a friend to Marina," she replied.

"Marina? Is that your name?"

"Yes."

"And so Selimok is a friend of yours?" said Will, glancing significantly at Brian.

"Yes, he was the one on guard. I arranged everything with him. He will not inform about your escape until we are too far off to be easily overtaken."

"Do you like this Selimok?" continued Will.

At first the girl bowed her head, but made no reply.

"He is a good friend to me," she then said, evasively.

"He is her lover!" whispered Will to Brian, as he directed his horse alongside of the young captain's.

"Perhaps so," replied the other.

When they had proceeded some distance further the girl held up her hand.

"Halt!" she cried, in a voice like the tones of an organ.

The boys obeyed.

"I must now back to the yourt by a roundabout way," she said, "lest I am missed and suspected. You must follow this path for about twenty miles; then turn off to the right, and, in a couple of days you will reach the seacoast. There is feed enough scattered to the horses, and you will find grass enough to keep them in good condition."

"But after we reach the coast what shall we do with the horses?"

"Let them go. They will find the way back to the yourt, probably. If not, they will be picked up and cared for by some person."

"And are we never to see you again?" said Brian.

"We may meet again," said the girl, with a blush. "Remain on the coast for a few days, if you can, and I will try to join you with your sister!"

Brian looked up in surprise.

"My sister? I have no knowledge, now, of her whereabouts."

"She is with her uncle."

"Are you sure? How did you discover that?"

"One of the Zunguze saw her with him while he was wandering afar from the yourt. It was on the day before the battle."

"Thanks for your information. You do not know how you have relieved our minds."

"Yes, he saw them in a carriage, with Peter and several Cossacks."

"Which way were they traveling? Do you know where they were going?"

"No; but I shall find that out. Good-by!"

Then, waving her hand to them, she started off at a speed which soon carried her from their sight.

"This is a great relief," said Brian to his friend. "We know at least that Minnie is in safe hands."

"Yes," said Will; "but she would be safer in ours."

"I have faith in that girl. She will bring my sister to us on the coast."

"The coast is a long one. How will she know the exact spot where we are?"

"She will look for us," said Brian. "If we follow her directions straight to the eastward we will reach some point which she will be able to find. My only fear is that she may not be able to rescue Minnie—especially as her uncle said that contented Peter will now keep over her a stricter watch than ever."

"I have that same fear; but I suppose we must follow the girl's directions and try to reach the coast."

"Yes, if we can."

They rode on, and before daylight they had made considerable progress on their journey.

Then they came to a succession of high, rocky elevations, too steep and rough to ride over. Across these places they were obliged to lead their horses by their bridles.

Arrived at last on smoother ground, they paused a moment near the verge of a forest.

Then they rode into it.

It was now dawn, and they had the advantage of seeing their way.

They felt by this time both hungry and drowsy.

"We must have something to eat," said Brian, "but we have no arms."

On taking the bags of feed from the horses, however, they had an agreeable surprise.

Besides the feed for the horses, each of the two bags contained provisions for themselves, and also a large, double-barreled pistol. In one of them a dagger was also found.

"That girl is a trump!" cried Will, delightedly.

"Yes, these are fine weapons, and here is ammunition to load them with."

The provisions consisted of some good bread, some deer's flesh and a bottle of wine. There was food enough to last the two for several days.

Having now entered a sort of glade in the woods, the boys, having led their horses and watered them in an adjoining stream, partook of their own meal.

The stream had a swift current, and, a short distance ahead, fell over a heap of rocks, forming a turbulent cataract that bubbled and roared as it fell into the water below, which there widened and rolled swiftly along, full of foam and whirlpools.

Then their meal was finished the boys fastened their horses by their bridles to small trees, and Brian then stretched himself on the sward, while Will stood the first watch.

Seating himself on the upper edge of the valley, with his loaded pistol in his belt, he kept a keen lookout.

An hour passed.

In the distance the youth then heard a noise like the voices of many persons, all shouting together.

He sprang to his feet and listened intently.

At last he discovered that he had made a mistake.

The noise heard was not that of human beings.

It was the howling of wolves.

Will, by this time, had become too accustomed to the sound to heed it.

The howling, which had at first seemed to draw nearer, gradually receded.

All at once there was a rustling sound, and Will beheld a squirrel darting along through the woods.

Soon it was followed by many others, all squealing as if much excited.

These animals were succeeded by a reindeer, the latter speeding along so swiftly that it seemed fairly to skim through the air.

Will admired the skillful manner in which this beast contrived to prevent its horns from being entangled in the shrubbery, past which it ran, and through which it occasionally leaped.

Next came a creature which the boy at first thought was a wolf, but which he soon perceived was merely a fox.

Away went these creatures, and as they sped on Will concluded that he would give chase a short distance and endeavor to shoot one of the squirrels.

He darted through the shrubbery, but he was unable to obtain a single shot at the game he was after.

Having vainly pursued them, he turned to retrace his steps.

Then he discovered that he had gone further than he intended.

The frees and the shrubbery confused him, and he lost his way.

For some time he vainly searched for the spot where he had left his friend and the horses.

Suddenly he was startled by a succession of short, snappish growls, followed by the neighing of the horses. This led him toward the place he was in search of.

The growls, followed by an occasional howl, together with the shrill, unearthly neighing of the horses, was more proof that wild animals had arrived at the point toward which he was hastening.

Especially alarmed for the safety of his friend, and bitterly reproaching himself for being tempted away from his post, the boy bounded through the shrubbery in the direction of the noises he heard.

In a short time he gained a position whence he could see what was going on.

On the back of each horse were two lean and hungry-looking wolves, which had already fastened their teeth in the necks of the poor beasts.

The blood was running in streams down the breasts and flanks of the horses, which were careering frantically about in their efforts to throw off their fierce tormentors.

With their eyes literally blazing like balls of fire, and the hair bristling about their jaws, the wolves presented a truly formidable appearance.

They resisted all the efforts of their intended victims to throw them them off, and, as they still tore at the flesh of the poor creatures with their fangs, they gave vent to their rage at the attempts of the steeds to throw them off, in fierce, smothered growls.

For a moment Will stood like one stupefied, gazing upon this appalling scene.

Not ten yards from the horses lay Brian, still buried in a slumber too profound to even be disturbed by the noises so near him.

The young spectator soon regained self-possession. He took aim at one of the wolves with his pistol, but, ere he could pull the trigger the horses, by their frantic movements, broke the reins holding them to the tree and away they went, dashing through the woods in long, flying leaps.

Will fired, and was gratified to see one of the wolves fall headlong from the foremost steed with a bullet through its brain. The others, however, still clung to the backs of the steeds, nor could they be thrown from their position.

Horses and wolves soon disappeared from Will's sight in the arches of the forest, and the boy was left looking in the direction where they had vanished.

As his friend still slept, he thought it best not to awaken him, but sat down near him, musing, with deep regret, upon his loss.

At last Brian awoke, yawned, stretched himself, and half rose.

"Your turn to sleep now," he said to Will. "Lie down and have pleasant dreams."

He looked around him, and for the first time missed the horses.

Will told him what had happened.

"It's all my fault, too," he added, sadly; "had I remained on my post this would not have taken place."

"There's no help for it, now. We'll have to do without them—to trust to our legs, as we have hitherto done most of the time."

Will finally lay down and composed himself to sleep.

He awoke much refreshed, and after the two had partaken of some of their provisions they continued their journeys.

Through the woods they tramped, proceeding at a good pace, until they finally arrived at a point where a wide stream with a strong current seemed to extend as far as they could see in the same direction in which they would have to proceed.

"If we had a boat," said Will, "we might make good speed and save many miles of walking."

"Just what I have been thinking. Could we not make a sort of raft? There is a large number of cedar boughs, which some of the natives have been cutting. We might fasten them together."

The two boys at once went to work. In a couple of hours they had constructed a small raft by fastening the pieces together with the tough, smaller branches of cedar, which they could easily bend into any shape.

"Do you think the raft will hold?" said Will, a little doubtfully.

"We cannot tell until we try. However, we both can swim, so that it will be easy enough to reach the shore, even if the pieces give way."

They carried the raft to the water, launched it, and sprang upon it, having first provided themselves with poles to steer the floating platform.

The current carried the raft along at a swift rate of speed.

"This is glorious," said Brian; "I feel as if we were once more afloat."

"If your sister were only with us I would enjoy it better," said Will.

On went the raft, the current increasing in swiftness as they proceeded.

They were, however, obliged frequently to use their poles to prevent the raft from striking the shore, toward which it was occasionally carried.

All at once, as they turned a curve in the land, they perceived a small isle, not more than ten feet square, ahead of them.

It was thickly covered with shrubbery, from which, as they drew nearer, there emanated a deep, gurgling sort of roar, followed by a loud grunt.

The next moment the shrubbery parted before the head of a huge animal, which fixed its glaring eyes upon them while it gave vent to another roar.

"What the deuce is that?" said Brian.

"It is a wild boar! You can see its tusks projecting out," said Will.

"We must give the island as wide a berth as we can, then," remarked Brian.

"I am afraid we will not be able," answered Will. "You can see that the raft is being whirled straight toward it."

Both boys made every effort to avoid the isle.

But the raft was borne toward it with a velocity which baffled all their efforts.

The boar had now emerged from the shrubbery, and stood thrusting its ugly head forward them, uttering, at the same time, loud menacing grunts, and showing its fangs as if enraged at being intruded upon by the young wanderers.

"No use!" cried Will, at last, "we must prepare for fight!"

Brian raised his pistol and took aim at the creature.

"Wait until we get a little nearer," said Will; "we have no ammunition to waste."

The other lowered his pistol.

When the raft was within about ten feet of the shore both boys fired.

Will's bullet struck the hard skull of the animal slantingly and glanced off without injuring it; but Brian's entered one of its eyes, eliciting a roar of rage and pain from the brute.

A moment later the raft struck the shore of the isle with great violence, when something which neither of the youths had thought of occurred.

In a word, the raft parted with the force of the shock, one half of it whirling round and drifting past the isle, the other part sticking fast in the cleft of a small rock.

Will was upon the half which remained fast, and Brian upon that which drifted away!

The former immediately sprang ashore, firing into the open mouth of the boar as he did so. Brian, thinking only of the peril of his friend, let go of the few parted logs to which he had been clinging and struck out for the isle.

But the strength of the current was great enough to resist the efforts of the stoutest swimmer, and Brian found himself whirling down the stream, further and further from the isle, upon which the crashing of the shrubbery and the shouts of his late companion betokened that a fierce combat was taking place.

Onward, down the stream, was the boy carried with great velocity.

He perceived that it would be useless to endeavor to make head against such a current, and so struck out for the shore.

This was not far off, not more than five yards from him, and yet he was a long distance below the spot where the raft had parted ere he succeeded in gaining the land.

Full of anxiety on his friend's account, he now ran in the direction of the isle.

The marshy nature of the ground on the bank, together with tangled briers and other shrubbery, so impeded his progress that a full hour elapsed ere he came in sight of the little island, from which he had been carried a full mile.

He looked if he could discover anything of his friend, but he neither saw nor heard him.

The combat had evidently ceased by this time.

And with what result?

Brian anxiously asked himself this question.

Then he called Will by name.

There was no answer.

"God help him! What if he has been killed by the boar?" he cried to himself, as he hurried on.

At length he found himself on the bank exactly opposite to the isle.

Again he called; still there was no reply.

"He has perished!" groaned the youth.

As he spoke he heard a rustling behind him.

He turned, to behold Selimok, the Zunguse, before him!

The man held a gun, which was pointed at the head of the boy.

The latter felt himself in the native's power. He had no weapon with which to defend himself, the charge in his pistol having been spoiled by the water.

"Prisoner!" said the chief, a peculiar smile upon his face. "No fight—no run—or we quick shoot dead!"

"I supposed you were friendly to us," said Brian, "by what Marina said. What does this mean?"

"It mean me plenty willing you go;" said the man, fiercely, "as soon you take Marina with you. Tell me where Marina, and me let you go."

"Your question is a strange one," said Brian. "I have not see Marina since the night when she left us to go back to the camp."

"Lie!" cried Selimok. "Marina come back, but soon go way again—go to be with you!"

"You are mistaken," said Brian. "I know nothing about her movements since the time I have spoken of."

Selimok seemed overwhelmed at this news.

But he still held his gun pointed at the boy.

"I make you prisoner, now," he said. "Come."

Brian advanced, but when he was within a few feet of the Zunguse, he made a sudden spring and pulled the gun from his grasp.

He had not made use of it, however, his arms were seized from behind and quickly pinioned.

As the gun was thus taken from him, Selimok repossessed himself of it.)

Brian now found himself in the power of several more of the Zunguse, who had doubtless been hidden while Selimok spoke to him.

"How did you get upon our track?" inquired Brian, as he was lifted to the back of one of several horses in an opening amongst the shrubbery.

"Stop too long to sleep," said one of the men.

"When Zunguse escape, he no stop for eat or for sleep till he far from his enemies."

"Have you seen my friend?—the boy who was with me?" inquired Brian.

But the Zunguse shook their heads.

The prisoner was made to ride between them. They were going further every moment from the island in the stream.

"Hold!" cried Brian, all at once, as he found himself on an elevated piece of ground, which commanded a good view of the island, and which he could perceive was occupied by no animal or human being.

The shrubbery had been so trampled down that any person or beast on the isle would now have been visible.

Having halted long enough to satisfy himself on that point, Brian signified his readiness to proceed.

Meanwhile, what had become of Will?

Before midnight the Zunguse reached the hut.

Brian looked in vain for Marina, as he was led past the tents of the band, to an isolated hut where he was left with three men to guard him.

(To be continued.)

"Mikado's Rescue from the Hands of Shoeta" was commenced in No. 668.

RIDING DOWN A DEER.

THE EXPLOIT OF AN ENTHUSIASTIC YOUNG HUNTER FROM LOUISIANA.

A CORRESPONDENT sends us a thrilling account of a most singular deer-hunt in which he lately participated, and which he truly says would cause the sportsmen of Bloomingdale Grove Park to open their eyes in unmixed astonishment. He writes:

"I had come toward nightfall to a little place called Crab Orchard Springs, in Kentucky, the queer, two-storied, rather uncomfortable inn of which, surrounded by a primeval forest, depressed me, and I should have departed in the early morning if I had not been invited to take part in a deer-hunt instead.

"Word was sent to the owner of a pack of hounds, some ten or fifteen miles away, that we would occupy 'the stands' on the river the next morning. It was a small river of which we spoke, flowing at the foot of the hills, some two or three miles from the village. When the deer were started they ran toward it, and there were several places where they always choose to cross, which places are called 'the stands,' and hunters posted at them could always get a shot almost any day when the hunt was up.

"Early in the morning we started. One or two men were detailed to occupy each stand; but three of us—an elderly gentleman from New Orleans, a boy of about sixteen, also from Louisiana, and I—determined to ride toward the point where the hounds were to be put on the trail, and meeting them, join in the drive.

"We were splendidly mounted, and were all good horsemen. We rode rapidly, having to get some ten miles from the stands before we met the dogs, and so have a long ride in chase. In an hour or so we first heard the distant bay of the hounds. First a single voice, then a glorious burst by the whole pack. We were excited, of course, and urged our horses to a rapid pace.

"From the cry of the hounds as it continued, the deer seemed to be circling around in the hills, instead of making a straight run for the river, as was usual.

"We remained almost stationary, not knowing which course the hunt would take, and the music became less, until we heard the long bay of one hound only. But to our great joy, that voice seemed to be coming our way. From the length of time the game had been afoot, we concluded that the dogs had become tired and left the trail, with the exception of the staunch old hound, whose voice we could occasionally hear as he unflinchingly followed the quarry.

"Nearer and nearer came the sound. We dismounted, tightened girths, and waited. Our horses were as highly excited as ourselves, and we could with difficulty curb their impatience. We were stationed on the highroad leading toward the village, and the deer was evidently running in that direction. At length he came, a noble buck, gallantly bounding through the woods in a line parallel with the road, and not more than a hundred yards away from us. We put spurs to our horses and followed. My young friend, who had never before seen a deer in the woods, was almost crazed with excitement. As he rode by my side, he said it looked 'as big as an elephant.' On we drove, occasionally catching a glimpse of the buck as he dashed through the woods. It was very tired. The dogs had pressed him hard, and he had probably run twenty miles before he arrived at the point where we met him. Soon the noble old hound came in sight, and as he saw us he burst into such melody that we joined him at the utmost stretch of our lungs. On we pressed, rapidly approaching the village, directly through which the chase seemed fated to take us. Soon we came to a large cornfield, which was surrounded by a 'staked and ridered' fence six feet high. We could not jump it, and looked to see where the deer had gone in. We found the place, and tearing off the top-rail, leaped our horses into the corn. Rushing through, we arrived at the other extremity of the field just in time to see the deer attempt to jump the fence. The dog was close at his heels and sprang upon him, and catching him by the flank, prevented his leap.

"The poor animal was evidently worn out with his long run, but he bravely charged the dog, and, leaping over him, ran gallantly back toward the point at which he had entered the field. We turned likewise, and, taking different furrows among the corn, pressed our horses to the top of their speed. My little friend rode between me and our companion. He rode leaning over his horse's neck, gazing straight ahead, and yelling like a madman. Thought of a raving lunatic. The corn was high and the dust so thick from the trampling of so many animals that at length I could see nothing; but all at once I heard a crash, a struggle, a shout.

"'I've got him! I've got him! Come quick.'

"I rode toward the voice, and lo! the young lunatic on the ground was struggling with the deer. Fortunately, the animal was so exhausted by the long run that the boy could pretty nearly handle him; but the horns, hoofs, legs, arms, boy, deer and dog were rather promiscuously mixed in a cloud of dust that enveloped them when I came in sight. I sprang from my horse, and drew my hunting-knife across the throat of the animal, at the same time seizing the boy by the collar, and drawing him away.

"After resting a few minutes, he told me that, seeing the deer rush past him, he could not resist the temptation, and threw himself off his horse upon the back of the hunted animal, clasping his arms round his neck. The shock threw the deer to the ground. We put the dead animal on one of the horses and rode through the village, and our young gentleman was the hero of the Springs for the rest of the season."

ROY, THE RANGER.

A Tale of the Mexican War.

CHAPTER XXVI.

OJO DEL TORO.

THE crossing of the Rio Grande placed the relative position of the two armies in a new aspect.

Hitherto General Taylor's force had been an army of occupation; now it was to become an invading power.

Future triumphs were to be not only victories, but conquests; disputed boundaries no longer formed an impediment to onward progress, and the City of Mexico—the Halls of the Montezumas—now became the ultimate object of military operations.

Monterey, the great interior city of Northern Mexico, was the point to which General Taylor now directed his marches.

The defense of this important place was intrusted to General Ampudia.

He had superseded Arista in command of the Mexican army.

The victories of General Taylor had caused some important changes in the Mexican policy.

Arista was ordered to the capital under arrest, and most of the officers who had served under him were either court-martialed or removed.

Colonel Falcon, however, holding an independent command, escaped the proscription.

The popularity of President Paredes daily decreased, and several parties were in open array against him.

The country was in a tumult of excitement, anxious for the utter extermination of the invaders, but distracted by factions, and ignorant of the means for promoting its object.

Amidst this anarchy, and fearful apprehension for the future, one man managed to maintain his popularity. This was Ampudia; and he effected his purpose by intrigue and misapprehension.

When the tidings came of the capture of Matamoras he spread reports that the main cause of the disaster was the cowardice of General Arista, and insinuated that if the command of the army had been intrusted to him the North Americans would have been annihilated.

Thus he secured the command of Monterey, and there awaited the approach of General Taylor's army.

The garrison was large, and the works of sufficient strength to be considered impregnable.

Though this state of affairs made traveling very unsafe, an old lumbering coach, of that antique pattern peculiar to the country, toiled along the Saltillo road approaching Monterey.

It was drawn by four mules, the right-hand one ridden by a gayly-dressed postilion, who belabored his animals with a saw-hide whip, and urged them forward with exclamations in which oaths and the names of all the saints in the Mexican calendar were strangely mingled.

The coach contained three passengers—a gentleman well-advanced in years, a young lady and her maid. Presently a posada appeared by the roadside, and the postilion drove up to the door, and the mules stopped of their own accord.

There was a motley group stretched in the sun against the wall, composed of those half-breeds, mulattoes and zambos, the poorer class of the country, and amongst them a monk, with his shaven crown.

What group would be complete without a monk in Mexico?

Many of these idlers looked as if they had overindulged in their favorite beverages of *pulque* and *chingarito*.

They gazed lazily at the coach as it stopped, and the postilion sprang from the saddle to the ground, but none changed their positions.

The elderly gentleman put his head out of one window, and the young girl hers out of the other, while her maid peeped curiously over her shoulder.

"Are we going to stop here?" demanded the gentleman, in very indifferent Spanish.

"Si, señor," responded the postilion.

"How far are we from Monterey?"

"Ten miles."

"Then I suppose we may as well," said the gentleman, resignedly.

"The mules need baiting, and the señor and señoritas might like some refreshment. Jose Quintero has good wine here."

The host of the posada now made his appearance, and bowed obsequiously to the travelers, no doubt expecting to profit by their visit.

He was a small man, of the true Mexican type, and with coarse black hair, swarthy complexion, and little sparkling black eyes. His attire was neat, and he did not have that greasy appearance that so many of his countrymen have.

He hastened to the side of the carriage where the two girls were—they were both young—one not above sixteen, and the other eighteen, and opened the door.

"Will the señoritas alight?" he inquired, in his politest tones.

"Oh, yes, let us out, by all means!" cried the youngest girl, and she sprang lightly from the carriage.

A leer arose from the loungers against the wall, and the monk crossed himself piously.

"She has a face like the Madonna," he murmured.

"Like the painting that hangs above the altar of St. Supulcio!"

It was, indeed, a vision of beauty that this young girl presented; a vision seldom seen in that land of dark hair and eyes and dusky visages.

Her hair was golden in hue, and fell in luxuriant curls upon her neck and shoulders. Her complexion was a clear red and white, and her eyes were dark-blue, large, and very expressive, and the profile of her face was of the Grecian order, particularly the nose.

A look of vivacity lighted up this face, adding, if that were possible, a greater charm to its beauty.

The maid followed her. She, also, could lay claim to beauty, but of not such an exceptional order as her young mistress.

Her complexion was also fair, but freckled; her hair an auburn, her eyes gray and her features good, but somewhat irregular, and her nose had a very independent turn at the tip.

Her figure was slender and graceful. In this she resembled her mistress, though she was half a head taller, and not so plump as the sunny-haired, bright-eyed girl.

"Oh, yes! let us out!" said the gentleman, as he followed the girls. "My limbs are cramped with riding in this infernal contrivance that they call a carriage here. What a benighted country this is! It's a long way behind the age. We do better than this in the States."

As these remarks were made in English the two girls were the only ones that understood them.

"I am guardy—but, then, it is a very nice because everything is so strange," replied the young lady. "I never saw such quaint houses, such peculiar people, and such wonderful trees and plants. Our journey puts me in mind of the fairy stories I have read. Doesn't it you, Milly?"

"Yes, miss; I think it is just splendid!" answered Milly, the maid.

"I think it an infernal bore!" exclaimed the gentleman.

He was quite stout, with a florid complexion, which beamed with good nature, and had a laughing blue eye, gray hair, and bushy gray whiskers.

"Look at this inn, or tavern—that's what we would call it in New England," continued the young lady, vivaciously. "They call them *posadas* here. See the inscription over the door, '*Ojo del Toro.*'"

"What does that mean?"

"Eye of the bull."

"Bull's Eye, eh? Well, I have heard of a Bull's Head Tavern, but never of a Bull's Eye before. Well, let's hit the Bull's Eye for some refreshment," he added, facetiously. "Give us a room, and the best you have in the house," he said, in the best Spanish he could muster to the host, who had been obsequiously awaiting their pleasure; "and you, Federico, get your mules ready to start in an hour. We must get to Monterey before sundown."

"Oh, we can do that readily, señor!" answered Federico, the postilion, to whom these last words were addressed.

Federico led the mules away, and the travelers entered the house.

The Posada Ojo del Toro was of that class peculiar to the country. It was built of *adobes*, or sun-dried bricks, and though it had a gloomy and prison-like appearance from the outside, it was quite comfortable within.

Jose Quintero, the host, conducted his guests to a small apartment on the ground-floor which looked out upon an inclosed garden, in which tropical plants were growing, and which had two birdcages suspended from an arbor green with clambering vines, the inmates of the cages making the air musical with their shrill warblings.

A pretty, black-eyed girl, whose strong resemblance to the host of the Bull's Eye sufficiently proclaimed her parentage, spread a table for them with wine and cakes and fruits, and they sat down to it, the girls not removing their hats, as their stay was to be so short.

The gentleman filled a glass with wine from one of the flasks and held it up to the light with the air of a connoisseur. Then he took a sip at it slowly, so as to give his palate a good taste.

"Ah! not so bad," he said. "Mary Frank, I can commend the vintage of the *Ojo del Toro;* allow me to fill you a glass."

He replaced his own glass upon the table, filled one for Mary Frank, and another for Milly.

"Try a glass, Milly. It will not hurt you," he continued.

"You must not drink too much, Milly," said Mary Frank, in a kind of mentor fashion, "or it will get in your head."

"Take care it doesn't get into yours, you madcap!" cried Richard Eaton. "It's exceedingly difficult to dislodge anything that once gets into your head."

"Oh, is it?" replied Mary Frank, deprecatingly. "Am I not sweet-tempered, Milly?"

"You are, indeed!" answered Milly; and there came a fond look of gratitude over her sharp features as she looked at her young mistress.

"Oh! you could cajole the old boy himself!" cried Richard Eaton, laughingly. "But come, girls, I'll give you a toast. Here's wishing we were well out of it!"

"It was a good idea."

"Perhaps, but somewhat galling to my pride, as I have gloried, in times gone by, in being a free-born American."

"But you put your pride in your pocket," said Mary Frank, with a sweet smile that savored strongly of mischief.

"Needs must when the d——shem! old boy drives. I was obliged to. It was done to gratify you."

"And it was so kind of you. Wasn't it, Milly?"

"Very kind, indeed!" responded Milly, who always agreed with her young mistress.

"I think it would have been better if I had refused," said Richard Eaton, shaking his head in a dissatisfied manner.

"Oh! that would have been cruel."

"Cruel to be kind! as Shakespeare has it."

Richard Eaton poured out another glass of wine for himself, and held it up reflectingly.

"I do not think it becoming in a man of my years and dignity—ahem!—Judge of the Supreme Court of Boston for the long term—to go gallivanting through this outlandish country with only two young girls for his traveling companions. But what will not an old bachelor do before the smile of beauty," he added, gallantly. "Here's your good health, Miss Frances Mary Alverton."

"Why are you an old bachelor?" demanded Mary Frank, roguishly.

"You forget that I am a lawyer, Mary Frank; what would a lawyer be without his mysteries?" he replied, dryly. "But talking of my mystery, what is it to here? Where is she now?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"Where did she say she was going when she started upon this mysterious journey?"

"To Italy."

Richard Eaton smiled in a vague manner that bewildered Mary Frank.

"Ah, yes," he said, mutteringly. "Onslow Bellingham went to Italy, but he never came back."

"Did he go?"

"Have you not always supposed so?"

"No; I don't think he went. He may have contemplated such a journey, for the restoration of his health, but he died before he could undertake it."

"That is what she told you?"

Mary Frank looked surprised.

"Why, you know he died at the Bridgewater house," she said. "She brought him home to Boston; you were at the funeral."

"Certainly; but I could not tell whether he had been to Italy or not, could you?"

"He did not have time to go there and return," she answered.

"Ah! well reasoned. You are a shrewd young lady, Mary Frances. It does not matter now whether he went or not; but it does matter about Zelia. I am somewhat curious to know the whereabouts of that charming, though eccentric, lady. Has she written to you since she has been away?"

"No."

RIDING DOWN A DEER.—AN ENTHUSIASTIC YOUNG HUNTER FROM LOUISIANA JUMPS FROM HIS HORSE ON TO A DEER'S BACK AND HAS A ROUGH-AND-TUMBLE FIGHT ON THE GROUND.—SEE PAGE 315.

He drank his wine at a draught, but the girls only sipped at theirs.

"Out of what?" inquired Mary Frank, demurely.

"This infernal land of Mexico!" returned Richard Eaton, forcibly. "This country of revolutions, anarchy, bad roads, beggars, robbers, vermin and filth! This inn is a paradise to some we have been obliged to stop at. There is a decent kind of fare here. Pass me that plate of—what do you call it?"

"*Tortillerias.*"

"Ah, yes! It's astonishing how quick you have picked up the infernal gibberish they speak in this country, Mary Frank. If it was only pure Spanish now, the dictionary might be of some use to a man, but it's only a patois."

"And it isn't the only kind of war they've got here," said Mary Frank, roguishly.

"No, it isn't; and that makes it all the worse for us. This wild-goose chase that you have led me on may play the deuce for us before we get through with it."

"It will be all right when we find Roy."

"When! Yes, but when is that when coming? That's what I would like to know."

"That's what we are trying to find out, and I guess we will pretty soon, now," answered Mary Frank, hopefully.

Richard Eaton shook his head dubiously.

"I wish I could think so," he rejoined; "but I don't."

"Don't get discouraged," pleaded Mary Frank. "You know we are very near the scene of hostilities now——"

"Yes, my dear, too near to be pleasant. The country is in a very excited condition. 'Death to the invaders!' is a cry that I have heard unpleasantly often of late. Haven't I been obliged to represent myself as an Englishman, that we might travel unmolested?"

Richard Eaton sighed and replaced his glass upon the table; but whether that sigh was caused by some love-memory of the past or was one of satisfaction over the wine he had just drank, it was difficult to determine.

"I suppose it is because I couldn't help it," he answered.

"Oh, yes, you could. You ought to have married Aunt Zelia. I tried my best to get up a match between you."

"Phew!" cried Richard Eaton. "Married your aunt! That would have been a brimstone match, and no mistake. I would sooner have taken old Lucifer himself!"

Mary Frank opened her large eyes widely in surprise.

"Why don't you like her?" she questioned, curiously. "She's very handsome, and very amiable."

"Too amiable for me."

"And she is very fond of you."

"What makes you think so?"

"She has often told me so. She has said that you were a man of honor, a perfect gentleman, and that she should esteem you to her dying day."

Richard Eaton smiled, and answered:

"I have no doubt, my dear Mary Frank, that your aunt has the highest respect for me. She not only respects, but——" He paused abruptly.

"What?" questioned Mary Frank, eagerly.

"Nothing. Don't be too curious, Miss Alverton. Milly, pass some of that fruit up this way. Thank you."

"Miss Alverton!" exclaimed Mary Frank. "How ceremonious you grow all at once. And you are as mysterious as the hero of a melodrama."

"I thought not. My impression is, and has been, that we shall meet her in this country."

Mary Frank uttered a cry of astonishment.

"Here? In Mexico?" she exclaimed.

"Exactly."

Mary Frank was bewildered.

"Why should she come here?" she questioned.

"For the same purpose that we did."

"To find Roy?"

"Precisely."

"But why should she wish to find him?"

"My dear Mary Frank," he answered, "is not Mrs. Bellingham Roy's stepmother, and must she not naturally feel a strong interest in his welfare?"

Mary Frank became thoughtful.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE RANCHEROS.

RICHARD EATON peeled an orange with deliberation, and Mary Frank regarded him with a questioning look.

"I don't exactly understand what you mean," she said, slowly. "It seems impossible to me that Aunt Zelia can have come to Mexico."

"Why any more impossible than that you are here?" he asked, smiling at her perplexity.

"Oh! but I thought we should meet Roy," she exclaimed, vivaciously.

"Yes, when you heard that he and his friend, Thomas Meade, Milly's brother, were with a party of Texan rangers fighting Indians on the——"

"*Llano Estacado,*" supplied Mary Frank.

"That's it—those Spanish words don't stick in my memory—you felt afraid that he would get killed, and wanted me to write to him to come home. Just as if he would if I had."

"He should; you are his guardian."

"I know I am; but I cannot control that reckless youth if I am; and I would like to see any one that can."

"I can," answered Mary Frank, with a positive shake of her head.

Richard Eaton glanced admiringly at the graceful and supple figure, and the beautiful face of the young girl.

Her beauty was not of the insipid order. There was decision and energy stamped in the fine-cut features, and soul and intellect in the dark-blue eyes.

"Yes, Mary Frank," he responded, with conviction. "If any one can tame Roy Bellingham, you can. What a splendid couple you will make one of these days. That's why I consented to this journey of your proposing."

"That is where you were wise."

Richard Eaton shook his head in that dubious fashion that had grown upon him during their journey.

"I do not know whether I was wise or otherwise," he responded, dryly. "This silver-mine business in San Luis Potosi brought me here. A large number of my friends and clients were interested in it, and wished to send a trusty agent out here to look after their interests, as there were reports of mismanagement. I accepted the trust in the hopes of being able to meet Roy out this way, and when you learned my intentions you wanted to come."

"And with your usual goodness of heart you consented; and as I had to have a maid with me, I brought Milly, so she could see her brother."

"Ah, yes, Milly, whom I saved from that young scoundrel, Alverton!"

"Hush! he's my cousin, you know, and young men will be wild."

"Wild! that's a mere word-cloak for rascality. He may be your cousin, but he's no more like you than night is to day. That is one of the peculiarities and inconsistencies of human nature," he continued, reflectively. "I can't understand how you, having the same blood in your veins, can be what you are, when Zelia and Alverton are—what they are."

Mary Frank looked surprised.

"I don't understand what you mean," she said; "though you are evidently complimentary to me."

"Never mind; it's only a way I have of talking sometimes," he replied; "and unless I miss my guess your eyes will be opened to regard to a certain party before we leave Mexico."

"There's more of it. Why don't you speak plainer?" she demanded.

"I will—when the time comes."

He would not tell her that for two years a suspicion of Zelia's design upon Roy had filled his mind. Her sudden journey, shortly after the tidings that had come from Roy in Texas, had strengthened that suspicion.

When the opportunity was presented to him for a journey into Mexico, to investigate the productiveness of a silver mine near San Luis Potosi, he

accepted it, and willingly consented to Mary Frank's request to accompany him, knowing that she would prove a formidable obstacle to Zella's design.

Hearing that Roy was with General Taylor's army at Matamoras he journeyed in that direction with his fair charge, in the hope of meeting him.

As he drew near Monterey he was informed by travelers he met upon the road that the Mexican army had retreated to that city, and that General Taylor would undoubtedly advance against it.

That city, then, was his goal—the point at which his journey must end.

He had found it necessary to represent his party as English, so inflamed was the populace against the North American invaders; and trusting to this fiction, he hoped to obtain permission from General Ampudia to cross the lines to the American camp.

Ten miles more and then the hope of his journey would be realized; for, despite his grumbling, he was as anxious to find Roy as Mary Frank was.

Ten miles more. He thought over it pleasantly as he took another glass of wine.

But where was Zella?

"She shall never snare Roy, if I can help it," he reflected.

He looked at Mary Frank.

"Ah, wait until Roy sees her! She was a girl, a child, when he left, and now she's twice as pretty as Zella, and just as smart; and if she discovers what I shrewdly suspect in Zella's design, she'll astonish that erratic female."

Richard Eaton fell very pleasant at these reflections; but they were rudely disturbed.

Federico, the postilion, darted into the room in a state of consternation.

"The coach—the mules!" he cried.

The party at the table started to their feet.

"What's the matter?" demanded Eaton.

And Federico repeated, helplessly:

"The coach—the mules!"

"Have they run away?" cried Richard Eaton.

"No; they have been taken away!"

"Taken away! By whom?"

"The cavalry—rancheros—there's a party of them at the door. They have seized the coach and mules in the name of the government."

"The devil they have! Curse their government! They always did have the worst government here of any country on the face of the earth. But I'll see about it. I'll appeal to General Ampudia, or President Pardes. Where are those rancheros! Just wait until I have a talk with them. Seize a man's coach on the highway! What an infernal country!"

Giving vent to these exclamations wrathfully, Richard Eaton strode forth into the open air, and Mary Frank and Milly followed him.

They found the coach and mules surrounded by a party of twenty mounted rancheros, whilst the group of loungers and the host, his daughter and servants, gazed apprehensively upon them.

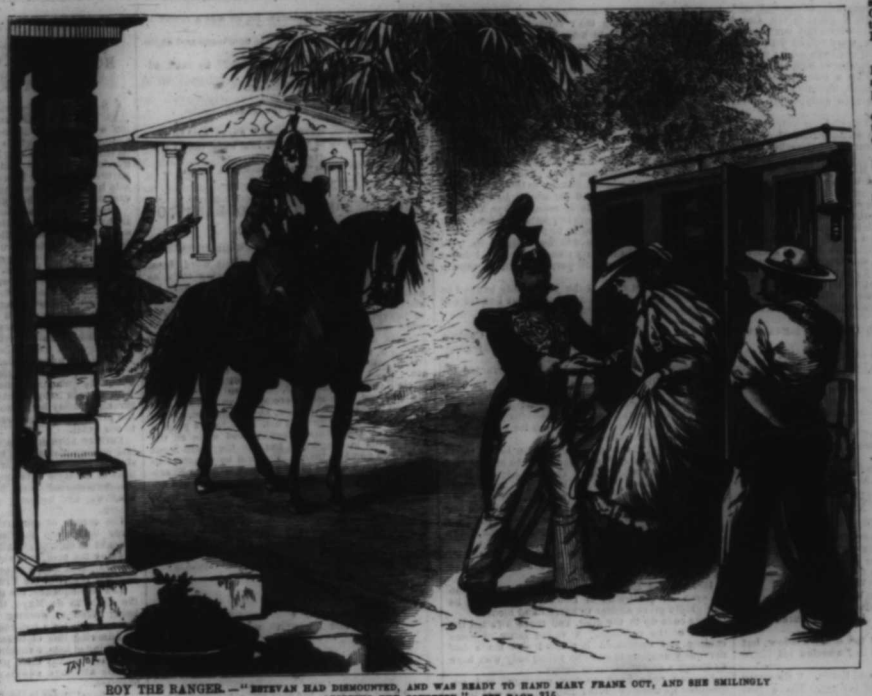
"Who commands these troops?" demanded Richard Eaton, putting the question in English in his excitement.

"Be cautious, guardy!" cried Mary Frank. "You can make nothing by threatening these men."

She advanced fearlessly by Richard Eaton's side; but Milly Meade, who was more timid by nature, remained with the host and his daughter.

Though Richard Eaton put his question in English it was understood.

A gayly-dressed officer threw himself lightly from his saddle and approached them, removing his sombrero as he saw Mary Frank's face, and bowing politely, though in evident surprise.



ROY THE RANGER.—"ESTEVAN HAD DISMOUNTED, AND WAS READY TO HAND MARY FRANK OUT, AND SHE SMILINGLY ACCEPTED THE COURTESY."—SEE PAGE 315.

"Santa Maria! how like the señora, only more beautiful! Can she be her daughter?" he muttered to himself.

His surprise was so marked that Richard Eaton observed it.

"What's the matter with this fellow? He looks as if he had seen you before," he whispered to Mary Frank.

"That is scarcely possible," she returned. "He looks like the pictures I have seen of the bull-fighters in Spain."

"He looks like the ringmaster in a circus to me. Do you speak English?" he added, aloud, to the officer.

"A little," was the answer.

"And I speak a little Spanish, so I guess we can get on."

"And I'll help you," said Mary Frank.

The officer bowed again, with great politeness, to the fair girl. He could not keep his dark eyes off her face.

"The señorita is very kind," he said.

"This fellow seems civil enough," said Eaton, in an undertone.

"Oh, yes; and he is not a bad-looking young man," returned Mary Frank.

"Oh, no!" responded Richard Eaton. "What an eye a young girl always has for a man's looks. You command this troop?" he asked the officer.

"I do; permit me to name myself. I am Captain Estevan Morales, of Colonel Falcon's cavalry regiment."

"You have seized my coach and mules."

Estevan laid his hand upon his heart and bowed again, deprecatingly.

"I am very sorry to deprive you and the señorita"—his bow had been for her—"of your conveyance; but I am acting under orders which I dare not disobey."

"Orders—from whom?"

"Colonel Falcon. He has a couple of ladies under his charge, and he directed me to scour the country and seize upon the first suitable conveyance I could find. This will do admirably."

Estevan waved his hand toward the coach.

"That's pleasant!" exclaimed Richard Eaton; but he did not look pleased, which would indicate that his exclamation was satirical. "I have also two ladies under my charge, Señor Captain; our destination is Monterey, and if you confiscate our carriage, pray how are we to get there?"

Estevan shrugged his shoulders—his eyes still on Mary Frank's bright face—he really could not say, he was overwhelmed at the thought of distressing the gentleman and the young lady—here he bowed again to Mary Frank—but his orders were to seize the carriage, and his orders must be obeyed. Colonel Falcon was very strict in having his commands obeyed.

"Who is this Colonel Falcon, that he has the authority to stop peaceful travelers on the public highway?" questioned Richard Eaton, wrathfully.

"He is our commander," replied Estevan. "A brave and skilful officer."

"Now you know as well as you did before," said Mary Frank, laughingly.

"Exactly," returned Richard Eaton, very much annoyed. "You take it coolly, considering that it stops our journey, Mary Frank."

"That's the way to take it. Keep your temper, guardy. Getting out of patience will not help us. This officer is only obeying the orders of his superior."

Estevan bowed lower than ever.

"The señorita only does me justice," he said.

"He's very polite," whispered Mary Frank.

"He bobs his head and grimaces like a monkey," returned Richard Eaton, irately. "His politeness will oblige us to stop at this posada for an indefinite period, I'm afraid."

"I am not so sure of that."

"Eh?" ejaculated Eaton, surprisedly. "Why, what can we do?"

"I will show you." Mary Frank addressed herself to Estevan. "Señor Captain, are your orders to take this carriage to Monterey?" she inquired.

"Yes, señorita."

"As we are going to Monterey would you have any objection to our company in the carriage?"

Estevan's face brightened; he evidently thought the suggestion was a happy one.

"Not the slightest," he responded.

"There, guardy, you see we can continue our journey, after all."

"Well, well, I have heard of woman's wit, but I never saw so capital an illustration of it before!" cried Eaton. "Really, Mary Frank, I am proud of you. Let us proceed, by all means, if we are to be permitted to do so."

"I fear you will not be permitted to enter the city," said Estevan, "for the North American army is advancing, and an attack is hourly expected. The two ladies I spoke of are anxious to leave the city before the battle begins. Still, if you desire to go on?"

This question was directed to Mary Frank, and she answered at once:

"We do." Then she said, apart to Eaton: "If we are not permitted to enter the city we may reach the American lines, or, at the worst, we can return in the carriage with these ladies. There's plenty of room in the coach for all of us."

"A good idea! Really, Mary Frank, you are developing into a degree of smartness that surprises me. Let me settle with the landlord here, and then we will start at once."

"And with a fine escort!" cried Mary Frank, looking at the rancheros. "How picturesque they look."

"Yes, but wouldn't our Boston Lancers scatter them!"

"They might," answered Mary Frank, laughingly.

"But don't tell the captain so; it might hurt his feelings."

"As if these mongrels had any," muttered Eaton, disdainfully.

While he settled the reckoning with the host, Estevan escorted Mary Frank and Milly to the carriage and politely handed them into it. Richard Eaton followed them. Federico closed the door, and then mounted his favorite mule.

His good-humor was restored, as he had been assured by one of the rancheros that the appropriation of his vehicle and mules would only be temporary, and that the ladies who were to be his passengers would pay him handsomely for his services.

Estevan led the way with ten of his men, and the others followed the carriage. Thus gallantly escorted, the carriage rolled upon its way.

Mary Frank was in the best of spirits.

"Something tells me that we shall soon see Roy now!" she cried.

"Something tells me we will not," answered Eaton.

"Oh! why do you want to discourage me?"

"I don't want you to be too confident. Your disappointment will be all the greater."

"Allow me the pleasure of hope, at all events."

"Well, that's a very transitory pleasure; but youth will have its dreams."

"And age, too! There, there, don't dampen my spirits any more. Look at the prospect. Isn't it splendid?"

"Yes; this is a lovely country, and if it only had some energetic people in it to develop its capabilities——"

"Let us settle in it."

"Thank you! I want to die in my bed. Boston is good enough for me."

Mary Frank laughed, and then remained silent, watching the landscape from the coach-window.

TALES WITH BOYS ABOUT FOREIGN LANDS.—VIEW OF THE CITY OF MONTEVIDEO, CAPITAL OF URUGUAY.—SEE PAGE 318.

The prospect was an inviting one, as she had said. The road wound through a pass in the *Sierra Madre* (Mother Mountain), whose tall peaks, even at that season of the year, were tipped with snow. From one tall peak a cloud of smoke slowly floated, showing that a volcano slumbered beneath.

They proceeded slowly up a steep ascent, and when they gained its summit, Federico paused to breathe his mules, and Estevan galloped up to the carriage.

"Behold! Monterey!" he cried.

Mary Frank uttered an exclamation of delight. As pretty a landscape picture lay before her as the eye could wish to witness.

In the plain below was Monterey, with its cathedral, public buildings and houses, with green gardens, looking most inviting to the eye. Every square and street could be distinguished.

There were the huge fortifications, which it was fondly hoped could bid defiance to the Northern invaders, with the Mexican flag floating from their summits. There was the Bishop's Palace, standing conspicuously upon an eminence, and General Arista's spacious house and gardens in the suburbs.

Estevan pointed this out to Mary Frank, as well as other points of interest in the city; and he dwelt glowingly upon the strength of the fortifications.

"Do you think the North Americans can take the city?" she inquired.

"Never!" he answered, grandiloquently. "The invaders will all find a grave here, beneath the sacred soil of Mexico."

Mary Frank did not consider it prudent to express her doubts upon the subject. She felt that she must keep up their neutral character of English travelers.

They began the descent toward the city. As they descended, another troop of rancheros rode forward to meet them.

"There is Colonel Falcon!" exclaimed Estevan; and he rode on in advance to greet him.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MONTEREY.

MARY FRANK reached her head out of the coach window to take a look at this colonel, somewhat curious to see what he looked like.

"Here's another chance for a handsome man!" cried Eaton, laughingly. "What is he like?"

"I can only see that he is a slight-built man, and wears a very handsome uniform. His helmet prevents me from seeing his face," answered Mary Frank.

Eaton put his head out of the other window, but when he looked the colonel had wheeled his horse and was riding away.

"He's a dapper fellow," said Eaton. "He wears the uniform of a colonel of lancers. That's just like them here. There's no consistency in this benighted country. Well, I wonder if we will be permitted to enter the city?"

When Estevan rode up to Colonel Falcon, as Zelia now called herself, and the knowledge of her true sex was possessed only by Hartnett, Graghty, Estevan, and some half dozen others, who had belonged to Falcon's original band when she had first encountered it, he saluted her, and said:

"I have secured the carriage for the ladies, colonel."

"Good!" returned Zelia.

She liked this young officer for the ready obedience he yielded, and if she had thought from some glances she had surprised from his dark eyes that he was ensnared of her, and that he thought more of the woman than the colonel, she liked him none the less for that.

She was willing that he should worship her from a respectful distance, knowing that at any time a little judicious encouragement would make him the slave of her slightest wish.

She managed grizzly old Tom Hartnett on the same principle.

Through these two men she ruled the motley regiment she commanded. Estevan held the Mexican element, and Hartnett the European, in check for her.

It might be that Zelia would verify the truth of the adage that it is dangerous to "play with edged tools," but no thought of such a contingency disturbed the serenity of her mind at that time.

The novelty of her situation had a great charm for her, as she had told Roy; the consciousness that she, a woman, was the leader of five hundred men, and that they would follow her when she unsheathed her sword—the good Toledo blade that had proved so fair to Romano Falcon—follow her up to the roaring throats of a park of artillery, was an inspiring thought.

Zelia reveled in a battlefield. She was utterly fearless.

The sounds of strife filled her veins with a species of intoxication, and made her soul impenetrable to any thought of danger.

It was this feeling that made her risk her life so heedlessly at Rosaca de la Palma; but that act of daring had made her the idol of her regiment.

Bravery is contagious as well as fear. All men admire courage, even if they do not possess it themselves.

Her officers were particularly impressed by her cool daring. The principal of these, as we know, were Hartnett, Graghty and Estevan.

"I never saw so smart a woman!" exclaimed Hartnett, his rugged features lighting up with enthusiasm.

"She is as brave as the Maid of Saragossa!" cried Estevan.

It was evident that he had heard or read the story of that heroic maiden.

Ned Graghty looked at them and shook his head gravely.

"She's fixed 'em both! and they'll be cutting each other's throats for her one of these days, I'm thinking," he muttered to himself.

As Zelia exclaimed "Good!" she wheeled her horse about.

"Where did you find the coach?" she continued.

"Some ten miles along the road, at the Posada, Ojo del Toro."

"Who did it belong to?"

"A party of travelers—English, the host told me."

"I suppose they were very angry at being deprived of their conveyance?"

"Not very. The gentleman was inclined to be angry, but the young lady was very gracious."

"A young lady, eh?"

"Yes; there's only three in the party; the gentleman, the young lady and her maid."

"Did you leave them at the posada?"

"No. I brought them along; they are in the carriage."

Zelia turned a surprised glance upon Estevan.

"Why, Estevan, what were you thinking about?" she cried. "You should not have brought them!"

"They were very anxious to get to Monterey, and as I was taking their carriage, I thought the best I could do was to bring them along. I didn't suppose it would interfere with your plans."

"Well, no, I do not think it will," answered Zelia, graciously. "There's no harm done; only I think they will be more anxious to leave the city than to enter it. The advance of General Taylor's army has been met and engaged by our scouting parties. Tomaso was driven back by the Texan rangers—I sent him and Edwardo with all but this company, that you and I have here. He reports that the American army is advancing in force to besiege the city. Donna Eusebia and her niece have already quitted the city. They are awaiting the carriage in yonder house, in the little grove there. Indeed, they had no desire to remain in Monterey long when they discovered that Ampudia was in command there. They hate him for having caused Feliciana's father to be put to death. Your friends in the carriage will be obliged to walk from this house to the city; and even then I doubt if General Ampudia will permit them to remain there."

"I told them so; but the young lady begged so earnestly to be permitted to come that I could not find it in my heart to refuse her."

Zelia smiled at Estevan.

"You are a very gallant young man, Captain Estevan," she replied. "Is the young lady good-looking?"

"Beautiful, colonel! I was chiefly attracted toward her by her extraordinary resemblance to you."

"To me?" cried Zelia, surprisedly.

"She is enough like you to pass for your sister, or daughter—were you old enough for that."

Zelia looked bewildered.

"Heavens! there is but one person in the world that looks like that!" she murmured to herself, in a troubled manner. "Can she be here? Mary Frank in Mexico? Oh, it is utterly impossible! This is only some fair-haired girl, showing her Saxon origin in her face and hair. I must see her—but I will wait until I reach the house. Bid your men follow me with the carriage, Estevan," she said to him.

The house to which the cavalcade was now directed was a handsome suburban villa, situated at the foot of the mountain.

It belonged to, and was occupied by, Jacobo Pinegro, an old friend of Donna Eusebia, and he had gladly given shelter to herself and niece.

Zelia rode up to the door, and there awaited the arrival of the carriage. A vague sense of some coming evil oppressed her mind and made her nervously anxious to see this young lady who bore so strong a resemblance to herself.

Estevan rode back to the carriage, and acquainted its inmates of the disposal that was to be made of their vehicle.

"Is it an inn, or tavern, or *posada*, as you call it here, that we are going to?" inquired Richard Eaton.

"No, señor, it is a private residence," replied Estevan; "but I have no doubt that you will be made welcome there until you can make arrangements in the city."

"Very good."

"Nothing would please me better," said Mary Frank. "I have been anxious to see how the Mexicans live at home, in their private residences."

"You have the best disposition in the world for a traveler."

"Am I so?"

"You are always pleased with everything."

Mary Frank laughed merrily.

"Well, isn't that better than grumbling?" she cried.

The carriage stopped before the house. Zelia sat motionless upon her horse, watching it with eager eyes.

"Captain Estevan, you must give me an introduction to Colonel Falcon," cried Mary Frank, vivaciously.

"I will," he responded, gallantly.

Federico jumped from his mule and opened the carriage door.

Estevan had dismounted, and was ready to hand Mary Frank out, and she smilingly accepted the courtesy.

Zelia's eyes were fastened upon the carriage door, and when she saw that lithe form, taller and more youthful, but not more graceful, than her own, the sunny curls, the fair face and lustrous blue eyes, an exclamation of surprise and annoyance burst mutteringly from her lips.

"Mary Frank!" she murmured. "And Richard Eaton! He here, and with her! Why—why! What evil destiny has sent them here? They must not speak to me, or they will be sure to recognize me."

And as Estevan was advancing with Mary Frank for the purpose of introducing her, Zelia wheeled her horse suddenly about and galloped away.

"Well, he's not at all polite!" exclaimed Mary Frank, piqued and surprised by this sudden movement.

Estevan was as much surprised as herself.

Richard Eaton came up to them.

"What's the matter with your colonel?" he inquired of Estevan. "I wished to have a little talk with him."

"I do not know," replied Estevan.

"Perhaps he is angry because you brought us here," suggested Mary Frank.

"He did not express any anger when I told him," answered Estevan.

"Perhaps he is odd—some men are at times," said Mary Frank.

Estevan smiled.

"Our colonel is certainly an odd kind of man," he rejoined.

Further debate upon the subject was prevented by a ranchero riding up to Estevan and informing him that the colonel wished to speak with him.

Estevan bowed himself to Eaton and Mary Frank and obeyed the summons.

"Something is the matter," said Mary Frank.

"Matter! How? what? why?" demanded Richard Eaton, perplexedly.

"This Colonel Falcon does not like our being here."

"Why not? Why should he care—what difference should it make to him?"

"I don't know; but there is something wrong, I'm sure."

"Of course there is. Did you ever see a time when there wasn't something wrong in this infernal country?"

"Hush! here's a gentleman coming; he's the owner of this house, I think."

This surmise on the part of Mary Frank was correct. Jacobo Pinegro came from the house and accosted them cordially.

He was a Mexican of the better class, about forty-five years of age, and showing his Spanish blood plainly in his features, for he was a creole of pure descent.

He was well dressed, and was courteous and dignified in his bearing.

"You are travelers, I perceive?" he said, addressing them in Spanish.

"Yes," replied Richard Eaton.

"Journeying to the city?"

"Yes; but stopped by the way."

"How is that?"

"You tell him, Mary Frank," Eaton said to her; "you know more of their internal lingo than I do."

(To be continued.)

"Roy the Ranger" was commenced in No. 281.

EASY LESSONS IN PHONOGRAPHY, OR SHORT-HAND.

REPORTING HALF-LENGTH WORD-SIGNS.

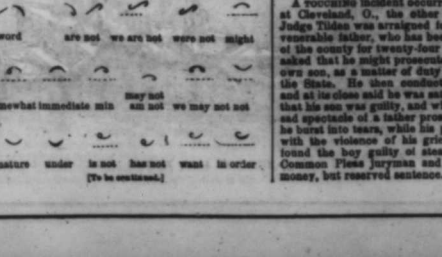
THIS week you have the Half-Size Word-Signs.

Follow the instructions for learning them as given in last two lessons. Learn one at a time by constant repetition. Observe the position, whether above, or below, or through the line, whether light or heavy. You observe that *L* hook implies the word *will*, and the *N* hook means *not*, as in the phrases *it will not*, which *will not*. Half-lengths, adding *d*, make the past-tense of verbs, as in *called*, *cared*, and *t* or *d* in other words, as *second*, *good*, etc.; the *t* implied by halving also, adds *it*, and circle *S*, *us*, as *if it, let us*. The two ways of writing *are not*, and *word*, are useful in joinings, explained hereafter. *W* hook, above the line, makes *we*, as *we are not*, *we may not*. Now, take a page of the BOYS' AND GIRLS' WEEKLY, and write all the hard words in long-hand, but use the Word-Signs when you come to them. You will be surprised to see how much of the print you can write in Short-hand; for many of the words, in these lists are necessarily often repeated, in print and in speech, which makes it very encouraging to the learner.

put particular-ly opportunity spirit about
till it told until it toward it will not
did not do not had not which will not gentleman
gentleman quite could called equaled accordingly
cared cannot account God good
great if it for it valued thought
throughout that without

In learning these signs, follow the direction given you in the last two or three lessons. This completes the list of word-signs, full-length, with and without hooks and circles, and half-length. Others might be manufactured under the rules. Strictly speaking, only those signs which are written in part, and not in full, should be called word-signs; for the full forms, of course, embrace the whole number of words in the language, but the abbreviated forms are those necessary to be learned for constant use and recognition. In writing all the word-signs, remember where the vowels would come if written, and this will explain in most all cases why some are placed above the line and others on or below the line, *according to the position or place of the principal or accented vowel*. You will notice that some signs represent the *derivatives* as well as the *root* word, as astonish-ed-ment, establish-ed-ment.

In such cases the sense required by good grammar in reading your notes will suggest which is intended. Circle *S* stands for *us*, *N* hook for *not*; as, *let us, will not*. *W* hook above the line, joined, stands for *we*, on the line, *were*; as, *we are not, were not*. There are two ways, you see, for writing *word*, and *are not*, one is more convenient sometimes than the other, as you will soon see hereafter. "We are not" must be written up, and inclined, like full-sized Ray; if not careful, you are apt to write it like "which will not," which is written down, however. "In order" is same as half-length Ner. Take a column of the BOYS' AND GIRLS' WEEKLY, or a few pages from a book, pick out all the word-signs you come to, and write them in the order of their reading, writing the rest in long-hand, or Phonography vowelized.


ed ed wished
astonish establish is it has it used wish it
ment ment
let let us world will not we will not Lord read
word are not we are not were not might
somewhat immediate min may not am not we may not not
nature under is not has not want in order

[To be continued.]

Talks with Boys about Foreign Lands.

MONTEVIDEO, THE CAPITAL OF URUGUAY, SOUTH AMERICA.

AS a ship slowly nears the town of Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay, we see before us the old wooden landing-stage at the foot of the Calle Colon. To the right is the old custom-house, with its stone quays and long line of sheds, beneath which goods are stored. Still further on is the naval department, with its lookout house, flanked on either side by heavy stone walls, through which the grim cannon protrude their gaping mouths.

Scattered in miscellaneous confusion lie cranes, anchors, and a miscellaneous collection of naval stores, while over all floats from its staff the graceful blue-and-white flag of the little republic.

To the left is an open space, behind which are built hotels and houses. Behind the low roofs rise the steeples of the churches, and then a few scattered houses clinging to the sides of the mountain, on whose summit stands the fort and lighthouse. Skirting the bay runs a line of sandy beach, while behind the mountain are the spacious corrals, with their herds of cattle waiting the hour of slaughter; for Uruguay's wealth lies in the numerous herds which graze upon its plains.

As we land we see numerous boatmen lounging about the quay, policemen clad in military costume, with swords hanging at their sides, and the usual throng of noisy hackmen and porters clamoring for the privilege of transporting ourselves and luggage to our hotel.

Further acquaintance shows us that the town is laid out in squares, with broad, clean and well-paved streets running at right angles. The houses are built in the style obtaining throughout South America—two-storied, with heavily barred doors and windows, and inclosing gardens or *patios* in the centre.

The season of our arrival was a favorable one, being that when the fierce heat of Summer had brought its annual influx of visitors from the interior to enjoy the cool, refreshing breezes and invigorating sea-baths which have rendered Montevideo the Summer resort of the Uruguayans.

As a consequence, the streets were gay and lively, the Calle 25 de Mayo, the principal thoroughfare, being filled at evening with bright-eyed belles, dressed as if for a ball-room, promenading between an admiring line of beaux. An incessant bowing and lifting of hats, a running fire of gossip and salutations, accompany their progress, and, as they pass by, the attentive swains discuss the claims of rival beauties.

The finest street in the town is the 18 de Julio, on which stands the obelisk erected in memory of the battle to which the republic owes its independence. It is a broad street, its sidewalk arched, like most of the other streets, with lines of trees, which afford a welcome relief from the rays of a tropical sun.

Of squares or plazas the town possesses four. The 1st de Mayo is occupied by barracks; the Independencia by a quaint market, which covers one-half of its surface, while the remainder is laid out as a garden; the Plaza de la Constitucion, with its garden and shade-trees, and the Plaza de Cagancho, on which is erected a music-stand, where a band supplies music to the populace on holidays.

The opera, the circus and the theatres are in the list of amusements the people enjoy, and they are all well frequented, Sunday being the day on which the largest audience assemble. The opera is an especial favorite with the Montevideans, and their enthusiasm over a popular *prima donna* rises to a pitch which would astonish the more phlegmatic native of a northern climate. Loud *vivas* greet her roulades, and at the close of a performance the stage is literally covered with a bed of fragrant flowers.

A favorite resort of all classes is an extensive park, containing a hotel and restaurant. It opens upon the bay, and the pleasant sea-breeze rustling through the foliage attracts numbers, who come on foot, on horseback or in carriages, to its shaded walks and drives.

Like most Spanish-American cities, Montevideo possesses many churches, the finest here being the Cathedral, on the Plaza de la Constitucion. This church is particularly noted for the beauty of its interior decorations. Many of the others, however, also claim notice for their beauty.

The suburbs are very pleasing, the grounds being undulating, and containing many pretty villas, embowered in gardens luxuriant with flowers and trees.

Much of this pleasing effect is gained from the large numbers of eucalyptus-trees planted on every hand.

This tree not only adds to the beauty of the scenery, but it has also been found a most effectual preventive of the malarial fevers formerly infesting the place, and by a law of the republic each landowner is obliged to plant a certain number.

Although founded by the Spaniards, and still retaining the Spanish language and characteristics, Montevideo contains a population largely made up of foreigners. Representatives of almost every nation can be found here, and in its streets and business houses may be seen Americans, English, French, Germans and Italians.

EARLY in the present century the Irish language was spoken, more or less, in every county throughout Ireland. It is estimated that one-fourth of the gross population, or about one million people, spoke English exclusively, while probably an equal or somewhat greater number knew Irish only. In the intervening period down to the present time a great change has taken place, as conclusively shown in the censuses of 1861 and 1871. In all Ireland now only about 163,400, or one in thirty-six of the gross population, still know no other tongue than Irish.

A YOUNGING incident occurred in the police-court at Cleveland, O., the other day, when a son of Judge Tilden was arraigned for petit larceny. His venerable father, who has been the honored judge of the county for twenty-four years, appeared and asked that he might prosecute the case against his own son, as a matter of duty owing to himself and the State. He then conducted the examination, and at its close said he was satisfied beyond a doubt that his son was guilty, and when he referred to the sad spectacle of a father prosecuting his own son, he burst into tears, while his powerful frame shook with the violence of his grief. The police judge found the boy guilty of stealing a coat from a Common Pleas juryman and then pawning it for money, but reserved sentence.

SIX SPLENDID STORIES!

The Slave of the Mine;
Or,
Jack Harkaway in 'Frisco,
By BRACEBRIDGE HEMYNG.
Begins in our next.

Long Jim, the Scout;
Or,
The Death Valley of the Apaches.
By HENRY B. BRISBANE.
And

Minnie's Rescue from the Wilds of Siberia,
Or,
The Daring Adventures of Two Brave Boys,
By ROGER STARBUCK.

Orville and Dan;
Or,
Adventures in Japan,
By COMMODORE AH-LOOK.

Roy the Ranger:
A Story of the Mexican War.

To those of our readers who are desirous of obtaining a full and interesting record of all the important current events of the day we recommend FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER. *No event of importance transpires unnoticed by it. Each number contains eight pages of the most interesting illustrations, one page being devoted to foreign subjects. Admirable serial stories, useful information, the latest discoveries among the wonders of nature and art, instructive editorials, cartoons, etc., etc., continually appear. It is a perfect library of reference concerning the history of the world for the past twenty-three years. It is published every Wednesday. Single copies, prue 10 cents; annual subscription, $4, post-paid.*

CAUTION.

Subscribers, in ordering our publications, should be careful to write the name of FRANK LESLIE *in full, and direct their letters to 53, 55 and 57 Park Place, New York, from which address all our publications are issued.*

Advertisements for any of Frank Leslie's Publications will be received, at regular rates, by Col. W. B. Crooks, 1,309 Chestnut St., Philadelphia.

FRANK LESLIE'S
Boys' & Girls' Weekly
THE
BEST BOYS' PAPER PUBLISHED.

COMMODORE AH-LOOK writes for it.
ROGER STARBUCK writes for it.
BRACEBRIDGE HEMYNG writes for it.
W. G. STODDARD writes for it.
LIEUT. JAYNE writes for it.

Frank Leslie's
CHATTERBOX,
AN
Interesting, Entertaining and Instructive Publication for Children,
Containing pleasing Stories, Tales, Adventures, Natural and Scriptural History, Poetry, Floriculture, etc., etc.

FRANK LESLIE'S CHATTERBOX is an entirely original and thoroughly American publication, and not a reprint of the English work of a similar title.

48 Quarto Pages---Profuse and Beautiful Engravings.

Published monthly. Sold by all newsdealers, price 10 cents a copy. Annual subscription, $1, postpaid.

Frank Leslie's Publishing House,
53, 55 & 57 Park Place, New York.

THE ROUND TABLE.

PRIZES.

To be Read by all who Send Answers.

FOR A COMPLETE SET OF ANSWERS TO ALL THE ENIGMAS, ETC., IN THIS NUMBER.

For the best and earliest, due allowance being made for the distance of each competitor - $5.00
For the next best - - - - - - - - 2.50
For the third in merit and promptness - - 1.00

N. B.—There is no prize offered for an answer to only one puzzle or riddle. The answers must be to ALL. Competitors in all parts of the country have an equal chance.

ANSWERS TO RIDDLES, ETC., IN No. 456.

1. Missal, Impute, Sports, Sirius, Attune, Lessen. 2. Soft Soap.—Sioux, OhIO, FleA, TraP. 3. Victor Emmanuel—VermicellI, CarroT, OratoR, ElM, MinervA, RyighaU, KaseL. 4. Ear-nest. 5. Char, Anne—CanoA, HudsoN, AmazoN, RiograndE. 6. Inter-mitten-T. 7. Spark, Park, Ark. 8. F, Ale, Adore, Florida, Erica, Eda, A. 9. Maple-sugar. 10. Hedge-hog.

WINNERS OF PRIZES IN No. 456.

1.—R. J. Butler, Westerly, R. I.

2.—R. F. Rogers, 1538 I Street, N. W. Washington, D. C.

3.—A. M. Sheldon, Columbus, O.

ENIGMAS, CHARADES, ETC.

—CENTRAL DELETIONS.

DELETE a tool the butcher wields,
And what is generous to; it yields;
Delete a vessel of small size,
And find a sin in housewife's eyes;
Delete a piece for honor struck,
And find what makes a beggar's luck;
Delete what means to listless hang,
When taken too often it gives a pang.

2.—SQUARE WORDS.

A hen oft last on first you know;
Third sings around by no means slow,
And find a sin in housewife's eyes;
A little winged pest he's reckoned.

3.—DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Finals must have primals
Or we throw away primals and finals.

Serve your time and this you claim to be;
A bird extinct, that no man now can see;
This in imperious tones bids men depart,
Rich works in this win the fair lady's heart.

4.—DIAMOND PUZZLE.

Tea; to till; warm; a cartilage near the breastbone; devout; a particle implying separation; five hundred.

5.—SQUARE WORDS.

A boy's name; a girl's name; desert; a girl's name; bristles.

6.—CHARADE.

Dear swell, my second first you would not like to wear,
Though first second you sport without care;
My first is bright and clear, and made by heaven;
My next is bright and clear, by man's art given.

7.—CHARADE.

First is a fruit with a very hard stone;
Next is long years, a hundred, it one;
Whole on the bird in its beauty we see,
As past us it wings its way airy and free.

8.—DIAMOND REMAINDERS.

Behead and curtail the following words, and leave a perfect diamond puzzle: To wander; a fruit; seriously; to consume; an insect.

9.—CHARADE.

My first was falling from the sky,
When Cupid, the rogue, came riding by.
He bore my second on his back,
And cried aloud, "Alack! alack!
Pray take the first from off the second."
The sun shone out, though quite unreckoned,
And lo! my whole most vivid and bright,
Shone forth at once a shaded line of light.

10.—RHOMBOID.

Across—AN animal; an animal; a market; a cat's utterance. *Down*—A consonant; an interjection; an animal; a vehicle; before; a preposition; a consonant.

FUN FOR THE BOYS.

"NO MAN shall ever kiss me except my future husband," she said, as he was about leaving her at the gate. "Suppose I agree to be your future——" "Why, then I'll kiss you," she replied, eagerly, and she did. Her mother was informed that he had proposed, and the old lady called round the next day to fasten matters, and before he knew it he was eternally hooked. It was a mean advantage, but a bird in the hand is worth two on the front gate.

PRETTY Jennie came to me,
Earnest, seeking information;
"Cousin, darling, will you show
What is meant by osculation?"

What could mortal man as I
Do in such a situation?
Father, mother, no one nigh,
Liberal views—a great temptation!

Jennie is my cousin, too;
So to please my young relation—
* * * *
Ah! you horrid thing, there now!
I referred to osculation.

POPULAR SONGS.

"Nancy Lee" and "Johnny Morgan,"
"Riding on a load of hay,"
"Does your mother know you're out,"
"Come," "Ten thousand miles away"?
"Little Fraud" and "Annie Laurie,"
"Tapping at the garden gate,"
"Oh, 'tis jolly," "In the starlight,"
"When a fellow's little late."

"Little Buttercup" and "Blue Bird,"
"Fondly" "Courting in the rain,"
"Happy little maiden" "Whispers,"
"Will he never come again?"
And "Tis nice to be a father,"
"When the swallows homeward fly,"
"Shilling short," and "Credit broken,"
"Captain Cuff," "How's that for high?"

"Baby mine" and "Little Barefoot,"
"Why does mother stay so long?"
"Naughty man," "My darling husband,"
"Do not sing to me that song."
"Little sweetheart, come and kiss me,"
"For the old man's drunk again,"
And "We won't go home till morning,"
"We shall meet" "The two bad men."

"Now," "My heart is sad and lonely,"
"When the band begins to play,"
And "I want to be an angel,"
A "Walking down Broadway,"
"When the moon is brightly beaming,"
"In the cottage by the sea,"
"Oh, there is no harm in kissing,"
"The fellow that looks like me."

"Have you heard my love was coming,"
"Bonnie Boon o'er the lea"?
"Brown eyes has that little maiden,"
And "A maiden fair to see."
"What is home without a mother,"
"When the Summer rain is o'er"?
"Captain Jinks," "How can I leave thee"?
"Then come in and shut the door."

"Once again" "The angel's whisper,"
"Put my little shoes away,"
"What care I?" "Oh, joy! oh, rapture!"
"Kiss me quick," "Sweet Ethel May,"
"Good-by, sweetheart," "Rock me, sister,"
"Dance me, papa, on your knee,"
"Don't forget to write me, darling,"
"When I'm gone" "Beyond the sea."

"When the purple lilacs blossom,"
"When the mists have rolled away,"
"We shall meet beyond the river,"
"Horace Greeley" "Making hay,"
"Near the banks of that lone river,"
"Woman's rights," "No tongue can tell,"
"Whoa, Emma!" "The cold winds whistle,"
"Say good-by, yet not farewell."

A GENTLEMAN, who is no longer young, and who has never been good looking, on taking a little Paul one day, before his parents, "Come, my little fellow, tell me what you really think of me. Am I not handsome?" The child making no reply, he added, "You won't tell me; and why?" "Because," replied the child, with a cunning air, "I know that if I were to tell you I would be well whipped for it."

PROFESSOR (to Senior, who persistently refuses to recognize the fact that he is "flunking")—"Now, Mr.——, what is this trap-rock?" *Senior*—"I can't, sir, recall the exact chemical composition." *Professor*—"Ah, very likely. There are not six men in the country who can." [Wild applause.]

SCENE in a Cambridge ballroom. *Snodkins* (to a very young lady)—"Are you engaged for the German?" *Very Young Lady*—"Alas! Mr. Snodkins, I am." *Snodkins*—"So sorry; you were my last hope." (Fact.)

ADVERTISEMENTS.

Latest fifth cut. A pretty and durable Fan; handle is a Wand and if skillfully held in closed position, will deceive your friends. A trick that cannot be found out. Sent by mail for 30 cents; two for 50 cents; double the price of a fan alone. Send for Circulars. Address
Parker Novelty and Novelty Company,
P. O. Box 4215. 39 Ann St., New York.

25 Elegant Cards, no two alike, with name, 10c. Agents wanted. F. W. DOANE & Co., Brockton, Mass.

A SET of 9 Russian Stamps for 15c., post-free. KRIEGER & MELLERT, 22 Clinton Street, N. Y.

$5 to 20 per day at home. Samples worth $5 free. Address, STINSON & Co., Portland, Maine.

$72 A WEEK, $12 a day at home easily made. Costly outfit free. Address, TRUE & Co., Augusta, Maine.

$66 a week in your own town. Terms and $5 outfit free. Address, H. HALLETT & Co., Portland, Me.

$777 A YEAR and expenses to agents. Outfit free. Address, P. O. VICKERY, Augusta, Maine.

Send Twenty-five Cents
FOR SPECIMEN COPY OF
Frank Leslie's
SUNDAY MAGAZINE.

Read "The Wit, Wisdom and Pathos of Childhood"; see the purest and best stories and poems for

Boys and Girls,

and grown people. It makes Sunday a cheerful day. There is nothing stupid, morose or heavy in our Sunday Magazine. Every man who wants to have a glad and happy household should let his children have the Sunday Magazine.

BE READ THE ABOVE TO YOUR PARENTS.

Frank Leslie's Publishing House,
53, 55 & 57 Park Place, New York.

GRAVES' PAT. RUBBER TARGET GUN.
An entirely new principle. Shoots Arrows or Bullets almost as straight as a RIFLE. Adapted to all ages.
Length 32 in. Weight 2½ lbs. Shoots 600 Paces, with 3 metal pointed Arrows, 3 Targets and Globe Sight.
$1.50, delivered, free of cost, throughout the U. S. on receipt of price, by cash, by express, not prepaid, for $1.00. Cloth of all required with Gun at a low rate.
JOHN WILKINSON, Sole Man'fr, 77 State St., Chicago.
Send one stamp for any elegant New Catalogue of Scroll Saws, Lathes, Archery, Base Ball, &c. Have the best goods in market, and at all wholesale prices. I am publisher of Hazen's and Ware's Designs, and sole importer of the genuine "Williams' Bent Rimless."

DO ALL YOUR OWN PRINTING
The Model
The Model
is simple, fast, and always reliable. Any boy can succeed and do all kinds of fine printing. Prices as low as $3. Largest size, for 5c. Rotary Press, for 5 cts. Over 7,000 now in use. Prize Medal awarded at Paris.

MODEL
Send stamp for Catalogue. Mention this paper. J. W. DAUGHADAY & CO., Manufr's, 704 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia Pa.

FOREIGN STAMPS.

50 VARIETIES, 14c. Turkey, Egypt, Brazil, Cuba, etc.
100 SCARCE VARIETIES, 38c. Fidland, Moldo-Wallachian, Rome, Hanover, etc.
Over 500 different packets and sets always in stock.
Illustrated Price Catalogue, post free, 12c.
The Illustrated Foreign Stamp and Coast Prospectus, containing a variety of information valuable to collectors, gratis, post free.
STANLEY, GIBBONS, & CO., 8 Gower Street, London.

THE EXCELSIOR $3 Press Prints labels, cards, &c. (Self-inker $5) 9 Larger sizes for business, pleasure, young or old. Catalogue of Presses, Type, &c., for 1 stamp. KELSEY & Co. Meriden, Conn.
ROTARY 108 PRESS, $100. Ours is the largest factory in the United States

PHOTOGRAPHIC APPARATUS Complete, 50 cents, postpaid (is so simple that any boy or girl can photograph perfectly at once); contains all the necessary chemicals, printing-frame, negatives albumen paper, directions, etc. Worth Brothers, 727 Sixth Street, New York.

JUDGE FOR YOURSELF By sending 35 cents, with age, height, color of eyes and hair, you will receive by return mail a correct picture of your future husband or wife, with name and date of marriage.
Address, W. FOX, Box 205, Fultonville, N.-Y.

CARDS 4 Chromo, 5 Transparent, 5 Gold Leaf, 6 Lily-of-the-Valley, 10 Rosette, 10 Scroll, 1 Finger Ring, 1 Love Letter, 1 Card-case with name, all for 10c. 8 pks $1.00. National Card Co., Northford, Ct.

50 Chromo, Snowflake, & Lace Cards, with name, only 10 cents. 40 all chromo, with name, 10c. 12 packs for $1.00. 40 STAR PRINT CO., Northford, Ct.

CARDS, 10 Lily-of-the-Valley, 10 Scroll, 10 Engraved 10 Transparent, 1 Model Love Letter, 1 Card Case, Name on all, 15cts. WARD & CO., Westville, Conn.

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS! A 48-page autograph album, beautifully illustrated, with 47 quotations, sent post-paid, for 15 cents. Address, JUDD CO., New Haven, Ct.

52 Perfumed Chromo & gilt-edge sav'd cards, name in gold & jet, 10c. Franklin Print'g Co., W. Haven, Ct.

50 Chrome, sn-wflake and lace cards, with name, 10c. 40 all chromos, 10c. Star Print'g Co., Northford, Ct.

AUTOGRAPH ALBUM for 15c. 48-page book. Illus with 24 birds, scrolls, floras, etc. J. P. Ingals, Lynn, Mass.

50 Extra *Bristol cards*, with name, in *Elegant Case*, 12c. *Best offered!* U. S. Card Co., Durham, Conn.

20 *of our Prettiest Motto Chromo Cards*, or *25 Illuminated Chromos*, 10c. NASSAU CARD CO., NASSAU, N. Y.

50 *Snowflake, Motto, Chromo, Favorite, etc.* CARDS, *in gold & jet*, 10c. Best! Burtell & Co., Durham, Ct.

50 Snowflake, &c., Cards, name on each, 10c. Send for price-list. C. E. Kay, 165 Ferry St., New Haven, Ct.

50 Snowflake, Chromo, etc., CARDS. *Name in Gold and Jet*, 10c. U. S. CARD CO., Northford, Conn.

50 Perfumed, Snowflake, Chromo, Motto cards, name in gold and jet, 10c. G. A. Spring, E. Wallingford, Ct.

$77 a Month and expenses guaranteed to Agents. Outfit free. SHAW & CO., AUGUSTA, MAINE.

40 PAGE BOOK OF WONDERS for a 3-cent stamp. Address, S. FOX & CO., 391 Canal Street, New York.

SEND FOR
Frank Leslie's
MARVELOUSLY CHEAP BOOKS.

8vo., Heavy Paper Covers, Illustrated.

	Cts.
MICHAEL STROGOFF. By JULES VERNE	25
FRITZ, THE EMIGRANT. By CHARLES GAYLER	25
MONTAGUE; Or, THE BELLE OF THE MATINEE. By CHARLES GAYLER	25
REAPING THE WHIRLWIND. By MARY CECIL HAY	25
JACK HARKAWAY OUT WEST AMONG THE INDIANS. By BRACEBRIDGE HEMYNG	30
LONE WOLF, THE APACHE CHIEF. By ROBERT H. JAYNE	15

Convenient 12mo. Books, Bound in Boards, Uniform in Style,

LIVING OR DEAD. A Story Founded on Fact. 288 pages, heavy board covers	50
WIFE IN NAME ONLY. By the Author of "Dora Thorne," etc., etc. 288 pages, heavy board covers	50
THE HALF-SISTERS. A Story of Metropolitan Life. 288 pages, heavy board covers	50
A RUSSIAN BULLET AND A BROKEN HEART. 288 pages, heavy board covers	50

For sale by all Newsdealers and at all Bookstores, or sent, postage paid, to any address in the United States, on receipt of the price named. Address,
Frank Leslie's Publishing House,
53, 55 and 57 Park Place, New York.

DE PROFUNDIS CANALI.

THE Morris Canal, in New Jersey, used to be a very prominent water-route for the transportation of freight from the Delaware to the Hudson, and in spite of several competing lines of railway, the canal still receives a large share of patronage from those who are not pressed for time in the delivery of their goods. On the course of the canal, which is one hundred and one miles long, it rises 1,684 feet above the level. This causes a necessity for twenty-nine locks in order to raise or lower the boats to the different levels.

In the city of Newark, New Jersey, through which the canal passes, there are two of these locks and one long, inclined plane. These are guarded continually by watchmen; but out in the country the locks are less carefully watched, and sometimes are the scenes of involuntary baths.

Frank Carter, a resident of Bloomfield, was very fond of swimming, rowing, and all other aquatic sports. He lived close by the Morris Canal, and frequently used to take his boat out on the canal for a row. Not being near any river, he was compelled to use the canal as a substitute. Especially did he enjoy this sort of sport in the Spring evenings, when it was just cool enough to make this sort of exercise pleasant.

One evening, being especially buoyant in spirits, he determined that he would not only have a good row himself, but would also invite his friend, Jack Calloway, to go with him. Frank had a special reason for being pleasant to Jack Calloway, for he was in love with Jack's sister, Edith. She was a very pretty girl, and Frank had been dead-gone on her for some months past. During the Winter he had taken her out to the country singing-school meetings, gone skating with her on the canal, which again answered for a river, and, to crown all, Frank had grown very pious since he fell in love with Edith, for every Sunday night he used to go to church. He was not much in the habit of this before he knew Edith, but I strongly suspect that it was for the pleasure of walking home with her that he so suddenly grew attentive to his church duties. At any rate, every Sunday evening, as soon the service was over, he used to contentedly and happily walk by her side from the church to her home, which was about half a mile distant, and from the time occupied in their homeward walks it became very evident that Frank would never make his mark as a champion pedestrian, for it never took him less than half an hour, and frequently an hour was taken for this half-mile walk.

Edith was rather pretty, and just such a girl to attract a young man with Frank's nature. She was no milksop, but a good, smart, active country girl, who could milk a cow, churn the butter, make bread, cook the dinner, and make herself generally useful around the house, and then when the work was done, sit down to the little melodeon in the front parlor and sing a pretty little song to her own accompaniment, while Frank would often join in with his bass. These simple duets were more enjoyed by these two young people than the most elaborate operatic arias would have been, because they thoroughly understood the former, while the latter would have been entirely unintelligible to them.

When Spring-time came, and the weather began to grow warm, Frank and Edith would often take long strolls by the banks of the canal, and sometimes he would take her out rowing in his boat. So on this particular occasion he had asked her to go out rowing with him, and she had consented, and Frank had also asked Jack, her brother, to go along, because, as I said before, he especially wished to keep in with Jack.

It was funny how such a bright and lovely girl as Edith could have such a stupid and surly brother as Jack. Just in proportion as she was kind and gentle was he cross and gruff. It was a rare exception that he had a pleasant word for anybody. Nevertheless, Frank, for Edith's sake, would never quarrel with him.

"What do you want me to go with you for?" asked he when Frank wanted him to go rowing. "Can't you row the boat yourself, or are you afraid to go out alone?"

"No, Jack," replied Frank, "I am not afraid, but I thought that you might like to go along."

"Well, I'll go," was the surly acceptance of the pleasant invitation.

Off the party started. Edith sat in the stern of the boat, Jack in the bow, while Frank had the oars.

"Which way shall we go?" asked Frank.

"Oh, let us go down to the lock," answered Edith.

This proposition seemed to meet the approbation of all, and so they started down the canal, Frank gently rowing, Jack looking idly over into the water, and Edith, sitting quietly in the stern, talking to Frank.

Suddenly Jack got up from his recumbent position, and coming to where Frank sat, said:

"Frank, let me row."

"Thank you, Jack; I'd just as lief do it myself. I'm not at all tired."

"Yes," said Jack; "but I've had no exercise at all to-day, and I feel as if I required some. Give me the oars."

Frank did not wish to give up the oars, for if he did he would have to go forward in the boat, from whence he could not so well see the face of his darling.

Where he sat, with the oars in his hands, he was face to face with her, and many a tender glance could pass between them unperceived by Jack. Nevertheless, he did not care to offend Jack, and so he relinquished the oars to him and took a seat in the bow of the boat.

Jack now began to row with all his strength. He was a strong, muscular fellow, and the little boat soon flew through the placid waters of the canal. Frank said nothing, thinking that Jack, perhaps, might be working off some of his ill-humor in this way.

Edith was not at all pleased with the change, and had not a word to say.

Pretty soon the lock came in sight.

Jack rowed on as vigorously as ever until the boat was within a few rods of the lock. Then he stopped suddenly.

"Edith," said he, "do you love Frank Carter?"

Edith was astounded by the question. She did not know what to say, but putting on all her courage, she whispered

"Yes."

Jack then turned around and said to Frank:

"And do you love Edith Calloway?"

"That I do, Jack," was the sturdy response.

"Then I'll marry you," said Jack, with a hoarse laugh.

Jack's manner was such as to excite apprehension in the minds of both Edith and Frank. Was he drunk? Was he crazy?

Frank began to grow somewhat alarmed, and offered to take the oars again, but Jack would not permit him, saying:

"No, thank you; I am going to row you to where you two can be married."

Edith became thoroughly frightened, and when, looking before her, she saw that the boat was rapidly approaching the lock, the gates of which were partly open, she begged Jack to cease rowing, or turn the boat's head the other way. Jack paid no heed to her.

On the boat rushed, nearer and nearer to the lock.

Frank determined to take the oars away from Jack by force.

So he arose from his seat in the bow, and said:

"Jack, give me the oars."

"I will not."

"Then I'll take them."

"If you do I'll upset the boat and plunge us all into the water."

Frank seized the oars, and then began a struggle. Jack was powerful, and would not relinquish his grasp.

DE PROFUNDIS CANALI.—"FRANK WAS A GOOD SWIMMER, AND IMMEDIATELY SEIZED HOLD OF EDITH, WITH WHOM HE SWAM TO THE SIDE OF THE LOCK, AND GRASPED HOLD OF A CHAIN WHICH RAN ALONG THE POSTS. EDITH HAD BECOME UNCONSCIOUS WITH FRIGHT AT THE CONDUCT OF HER BROTHER AND THE SUDDEN PLUNGE IN THE WATER."

In the meantime the boat almost approached the half-open gates of the lock. Frank, seeing that no time must be lost, made a mighty effort for the oars, and succeeded in grasping them as the boat shot through the lock-gates. Jack, seeing that he was overcome, seized hold of one of the gates, and giving a powerful push, sent the boat spinning through, and at the same time upsetting it. All three were thrown overboard. Frank was a good swimmer, and immediately seized hold of Edith, with whom he swam to the side of the lock and grasped hold of a chain which ran along the posts. Edith had become unconscious with fright at the conduct of her brother and the sudden plunge in the water.

Frank supported her and shouted for assistance. The lock-keeper heard the shouts, and soon made his appearance, and by his aid the fainting girl was lifted out to the land. Jack was no swimmer, and Frank, in his first few moments of indignation, would have left him to drown, but afterward reflected that he was the brother of the girl he loved, and after he had seen Edith safe he found Jack clinging to the bottom of the overturned boat. He went back after him and helped him out of the water.

Edith was taken to her home and soon recovered from her adventure.

Not so Jack, however. He was put to bed in a delirious fever, and for weeks hung between life and death. When he recovered, his mind was an utter blank as to the events of that exciting evening. He remembered nothing whatever of the adventure. He had been really out of his mind at the time.

The fever from which he subsequently suffered had already then seized him, and his actions and words, so strange, were prompted by the ravings of delirium. After his restoration to health he was a changed man. He was no longer morose and surly, but became bright and animated.

From the depths of the canal he seemed to have drawn a better nature, and when, some months after, Frank and Edith were united with those blissful ties that made them one for ever, Jack Calloway was the groom's "best man."

Frank and his lovely wife long had cause to bless the adventure in the canal, since from it there came such a change in Jack, and to-day there do not live in the little town of Bloomfield three happier people than Frank Carter and his wife, and Jack Calloway.

CURIOSITIES OF DEATH.

THE quarterly report of the Board of Health of New York City, just prepared, shows some remarkable instances attending the death of persons who were killed by accident or negligence, or who committed suicide. These incidents, too, are varied as can be imagined. A child was burned to death by a lighted candle falling on its crib, a boy died of a fracture received while playing football, and a man was killed by an iron ball thrown from a sling. One person was fatally scalded by hot tea and one by hot soup, while hot coffee has proved twice as disastrous. Hot water was the most fatal, as it killed ten persons, but no mention is made of hot rum. Curiously enough, one person died from drinking kerosene oil, which many people believe to be a life-giving draught. Eight babies were overlaid in bed, and dying left unsolved the old riddle of "What was I begun for to be so soon done for?" One case of violent death was doubtless a judgment of Providence, for it was during Lent, and the victim ate meat. The morsel refused to go into his stomach, and, lodging in his gullet, strangled him. It would seem that there is a different degree of fatality connected with different parts of a house. Only one person was killed by falling from a roof and two by falling into cellars, while thirteen people died after falling down-stairs, and the same number after falling out of windows. One unfortunate person died simply on account of falling out of a chair. Suicide shows some strange coincidences. Two butchers killed themselves by hanging, and two shoemakers sought death in the same manner. An Irish boy, only sixteen years of age, hanged himself, and a young lawyer found an easier death by taking McMunn's elixir of opium. Hanging, the pistol, paris-green and cutting of the throat were the favorite means used for committing suicides. There were some forty persons who having fought disease, misery and poverty for nearly a century, succumbed at last to accidents. Mary Moan, a woman of ninety-five, was run over by a street-car and died of her injuries. Eliza Thompson, a colored woman of 104, was knocked down by a truck and died. A more curious case was that of a laborer named Robert Mulbearn. He had suffered for a long time from that most fatal of all affections, heart-disease, yet he lived to be 101 years of age. And many persons younger than these died simply of old age.